BETTY STEVENSON

Y. M. C. A.

CROIX DE GUERRE AVEC PALME

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BETTY STEVENSON, Y.M.C.A.

CROIX DE GUERRE AVEC PALME

BETTY

To them that knew her, there is living flame
In these the simple letters of her name.
To them that knew her not, be it but said:
So strong a spirit is not of the dead.

G. Meredith.

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Betty Stevenson, Y.M.C.A.

CROIX DE GUERRE AVEC PALME

SEPT. 3, 1896—MAY 30, 1918

EDITED BY

C. G. R. S. AND A. G. S.

WITH FOUR PHOTOGRAVURE PORTRAITS

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Because of you we will be glad and gay,
  Remembering you, we will be brave and strong,
And hail the advent of each dangerous day,
  And meet the great adventure with a song.
And as you proudly gave your jewelled gift,
  We'll give our lesser offering with a smile,
Nor falter on that path, where, all too swift,
  You led the way and leapt the golden stile.
Whether you seek new seas or heights unclimbed,
  Or gallop in unfooted asphodel,
We know you know we shall not lag behind,
  Nor halt to waste a moment on a tear ;
And you will speed us onward with a cheer,
  And wave beyond the stars that all is well.

The Times, June 1915.

RAYMOND
MEMORIAL

PREFACE

This story of Betty's twenty-one years has been printed, first because she was one of a big family of friends who loved her dearly, and who wanted to have a record of her life and death which another generation might still remember, when our stories and memories are silent. And secondly, because it seemed to us, who knew and loved Betty best of all, that, although she never thought of it herself, she had a message to give the world.

During the testing years of war, the spirit of England has been kept alive and strengthened by the gallant devotion of those who fought and died for her, and whose motto, whether they knew it or not, was the vow of Blake :—

"I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land."

Devotion and self-sacrifice must draw the picture, but, none the less, joyousness and gay adventure may colour it. It was so that our Happy Warrior set out, and so she did her war work to the end.

She could say with Antigone :—

οὔτοι συνέχθειν, ἀλλὰ συμφίλειν ἔφυν.[1]

And it seems to us that, in the building up of the new England that is to come, the world needs this message of hers : a message of youth, of sympathy, of duty happily and cheerfully done, of joy in everything she did.

This is not a formal biography. Except for the time during which her mother was with her, we have just put together extracts from her letters and diaries, and left them to tell their own story of what she thought and saw and did. We have filled in some names of places which were only indicated by initials in her letters. Betty was always a great letter writer, from the first, written with baby fingers, to the latest written on what was her last night on earth, full of love and concern

[1] "*I was not born to join in hate, but love.*"

for us at home, with not one word of the peril, weariness, and strain through which Étaples was passing.

We have added a little poem, "The Two Ships," and a little Christmas story, both of which she wrote in 1915. We are grateful to Betty's many friends who have allowed us to print their letters. Each adds something to the picture of Betty.

C. G. R. S.
A. G. S.

1919.

NOTE.—The proceeds of the sale of this book will be used for the purposes of the Harrogate Y.M.C.A.

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BETTY

1898

I

My little Maid, my Betty,
My little blue-eyed Maid,
What sweet gay thoughts lie hid in you,
Behind your eyes, your eyes so blue?

II

My little Maid, my Betty,
My little gold-haired Maid,
What do you say to the breeze so bold
That lifts your curls, your curls of gold?

III

My little Maid, my Betty,
My sleepy, sleeping Maid,
What gay little dream do you dream in your bed,
That parts your lips, so soft and red?

IV

My little Maid, my Betty,
My little softling Maid,
What do you hold, that I cannot see
In your strong small hand, flung out to me?

1898. C. G. R. S.

Betty Stevenson, Y.M.C.A.

CROIX DE GUERRE AVEC PALME

CHAPTER I

BEFORE THE WAR

Looking back on Betty's childhood, one sees more clearly the beginnings of all the qualities which inspired her work later on. Born on 3rd September 1896, she was very happy from babyhood, keen and eager-hearted in everything she did. Like Browning's little Duchess,

> "She liked whate'er
> She looked on, and her looks went everywhere."

From the beginning she had a great love for "all things both great and small." "Tell me how snakes cry and squeak, please," she writes, æt. 4, and a few years later: "I have found a flower called Vipers Bugloss. It had been the dream of my life to find it, and now I've found it. Hurrah."

When she was quite a little child we found her indignantly picking the flies off the fly-catchers, and washing their legs. Then there was an old rheumy-eyed horse which used to put its head over into the garden at East Garth, and Betty felt she had to wipe its eyes and make it comfortable. But it was a pity that one of her mother's best lace handkerchiefs was the first thing that came to her hand! She was very fond of mice, and used to make friends with wild ones, which let themselves be caught, and added to her Mousery. When she was quite small, she went in for an Essay Competition about Mouse-keeping, and amused herself greatly by writing it to suit the style of "The Fancy," who wrote in the paper. The prize, a box full of some special breed of mice, multiplied alarmingly.

She always had dogs, from Kelpie, a little Aberdeenshire, to Grim, the Samoyede; and just at the end, in France, she befriended two little dogs, one of which died in an air raid the day after Betty left us, while the other is kept and loved by one of her colleagues in memory of her.

One of her great delights was hunting with the Bramham Moor and York and Ainsty Hounds. She began before she was nine, and hunted regularly on Fanny, her beloved pony, till she went to school.

She loved birds, and used to stalk them by the hour, with a field glass, studying every detail of what they did and how they looked. She used to make innumerable notes of bird life. One essay describes their beaks and feet, and how these were adapted to their various needs; and another tells all about the size, shape, and marking of their eggs.

In September 1910, at fourteen, Betty went to a Boarding School at St George's Wood, Haslemere. Her first letter home begins characteristically, "It's perfectly lovely here." Betty was always a great letter-writer, and from this time on she used to send home enormous letters every week, telling of all she saw and did and thought. She found romance in all the little details of her school life, and made the best of everything.

"Everybody has a duty. The first week me and Betty Renwick had the boot-hole (it is

really a room); it was lovely, we had to keep it tidy, and we were allowed to (or rather had to) confiscate anybody's clean boots or shoes that were left out. It was simply heavenly. The feeling of confiscating other people's boots till they paid ½d. each for them: it was too lovely for words!! When I was on the way down to tidy it, people would rush in and throw their boots into any hole they could find, so they wouldn't be left out; it was lovely. Last week I had to see to the flowers in the Fifth Class-room, and this week I have to mark the Hockey Lawn. . . .

". . . It is so funny, every now and then little things happen or are said, not to me, but to anybody, that make me feel terribly homesick. I don't know what it is. Only every now and then. In church this morning in one of the Lessons came something about 'Be not weary of well doing,' and I remembered you putting that in 'Flowers of the Field' that I won for exams., and for a moment I felt horribly homesick; then I forgot, and felt quite all right. Wasn't it funny? I wish you'd come and see me."

From the beginning, Betty saw life with very clear and fearless eyes. She always got outside her troubles. Behind her fun, and joy of life and spontaneity, she had a fine sense of duty and the meaning of life. The little school essay which follows was written in her fifteenth year.

What is a Vocation ?

25.6.11. Betty Stevenson.

"A vocation, in other words, means a calling, a calling from God. Nearly everyone's work can be a calling, but not everyone knows it. It makes a great difference to your life, if you have a vocation or not. If you have, it makes you feel as though you had some real object or aim in your life and work. I think any kind of charitable work must be an especial calling from God.

"I am sure that God has special work for each individual person to do, and it is for that person to find out what his or her special work is, which is impossible for one who has not had a vocation, and has not the divine know-

ledge and understanding of God as He is. No two persons' work can be alike.

"Any work, however dull or hard, becomes interesting and easy if you feel you are doing it for God, not merely for yourself. There is *no* work which is too hard to be done. God gives us our work, and He would not give it to us, if it was too hard to be done. Take for instance, as an example, the life of Our Lord. His life was from beginning to end a vocation. He gave up the whole of his life and thought to his work. Nothing is too hard for God, and man is God's image. Therefore, nothing should be too hard for man, and nothing is, or would be too hard, if man would only understand this.

"Man cannot live without God. Those who care not for God are not really alive. They are dead, and it is the business of those who *do* know, and do love and care for God, to teach those who do not know God, for God made man to teach man.

"If one believes that one really has a vocation, it makes life a totally different thing. If everyone believed they had a calling, and were

trying their utmost to obey it, there would be no discord, and all would be harmonious. There would be nothing ugly ; all would be beautiful. God only made beautiful things. Everything that we see around us that is beautiful is a thought or an idea of God. To really obey and understand one's calling, one must understand God ; not merely believe, but understand. When a man really understands God there is nothing more to fear, for he is living in God."

In September 1913 she went to Brussels, to study music under M. Sevenants. She had always been a lover of music, and had always worked thoroughly and steadily, and she was delighted at the idea of studying in a Conservatorium.

18 Rue Dautzenberg,
Brussels, 8*th October* 1913.

My darlingest Mother,—. . . It is so lovely to be able to do, to a certain extent, exactly what you like, and not to have someone always making up your mind for you. Of course, I am not talking about home, but School ! (x).

I have to do three hours a day practising, but then I can do it when I like, only I mustn't do more than an hour at a time—if I can help it. I am enclosing two days' Diary. I am not enclosing more because of the weight. I will try and send you them twice a week. Please keep the Diaries, because I want to copy them into a proper book, when I get home. I am buying P.C.s of Brussels to put in it, like my summer holidays' Diaries. You will see all the sins, etc., I have committed, in the Diaries. I have put them all in, and I don't apologise one bit for any of them, because I have a clear conscience, and know they are not really sins ! (x). I am writing this in a hurry before the literature lesson, so please excuse faults.

In music I am doing scales and arpeggios, and I must confess it fascinates me horribly doing them with a metronome! I can sit for any length of time playing scales like that, getting a bit quicker each time. It's simply lovely. Also I am doing an awful Loeschorn Study, Beethoven's Funeral March, and the next movement of the same Sonata; a Bach invention, and a Chopin Impromptu, which is the difficultest thing I have ever done, though glorious. I am enjoying my music most awfully, and I feel sure I am improving.

Last night I learnt how to make *Crème au Chocolat*, it is lovely, and so easy. You will have lovely food when I come home.

I adore fencing. I must stop now darling,
—Your loving fillette, BUNCH. x x x
A. W. T. S.

A LETTER TO HER DOG

Chez MLLE TOBIE,
18 RUE DAUTZENBERG,
BRUSSELS, *6th November* 1913.

MY DARLING KELPIE,—Thank you so much for your letter, which arrived this morning.

You are a nice tyke to write to me. I'm so sorry I have not written to you before. I am so glad you are being such a good black dog while I am away. I am being very good too, though lately I've been having distemper, which was beastly. However, I am all right again now.

I think it was very sensible of you to run away a second time, when the missus said you were naughty. I should have done just the same myself. I give you free leave to bite her calves very hard. . . .

I am very glad you like the noises of Willy Wagner. I admire your taste. I hope you like Charlie Chopin too.

In the holidays we will have to try and make the acquaintance of the Skye terrier. I think he would be a useful friend, don't you ? . . . In the holidays we'll have grand times, and you shall share my food. We'll have a fine time in the loft and stables too. Have you heard of Grey Gables ? . . . There'll be no lofts and spinneys, and birk-crags and stables there, growler darling. It will be sad, won't it ? But, of course, we two could run away and

live in our house at Birk Crag on Harlow Car. I think we will. That would be lovely. I send you a hug and a kiss, my tykesome hound.
—Your loving mistress, BETTY.
Wags from me.

FROM THE BRUSSELS DIARY

This afternoon, there were crowds of school children playing on the grass ; the boys at one end and the girls at the other, with a strict space between the two. As far as I could see, the girls seemed to be playing marriages and hide-and-seek, and the boys, fights, burials, and general massacres. One little girl was gazing very longingly at rows of dead little boys being decapitated, etc., but she had not the courage to go too near. All the children, taken as a whole, were most picturesque and gay, and it was only when one looked very closely that one noticed the shabbiness. English school children would never look so gay and almost smart, as some of these little French poor children looked. It was not that the garments themselves were good, very much the con-

trary, but they knew exactly how to put them on. Each bit of shabby finery was arranged in a way which only French people, I think, know how. I have noticed it, on a much higher scale of course, in Brussels itself, the tilt of a hat or the turn of a ribbon, nothing more, and above all the movement of the body. I have not seen one really awkward or gawky woman or girl in Brussels. I noticed the movement with the poor children in the Bois. While playing unconsciously or copying some grown-up, every movement was graceful.

. . . . . .

. . . To-day was one of the days, when, if you are not very careful, you begin to feel homesick and other little unpleasant feelings like that. There was no reason for it, except that I think there was a mild sirocco blowing round the house, because certainly there is nothing else here except that to give one—

"The hump, the hump, the camellious hump,
The hump that is black and blue."

. . . . . .

. . . We met the little Princess Marie-José driving back from the Bois with her governess.

She is such a dear little thing. She is only about eight years old, and she is very pretty. She has such heaps of short fair curly hair. It simply stands out round her head like a halo. She is extremely popular, and very amusing and mischievous.

. . . We had dinner at 6.30 as we were going to the Opera to see "Carmen." At 7.45 the cab came, and we all rolled off. It was thrilling. It was the first time I have ever been in a foreign theatre, and it was absolutely different from an English one. We could see everything quite well. There were a great many soldiers there. "Carmen" was just lovely. I have never seen anything like it before. In the first scene and in all of them the colours were really superb. The voices were gorgeous too. The chorus surprised me a great deal, having only heard theatre choruses. I was not prepared for such a burst of glorious sound. . . .

. . . After lunch we went to see the "Exposition de la Societé Royale Belge des Aquarellistes." It was very interesting. It was the first day, and the ordinary public

was not admitted, but we happened to have invitations, which was lucky. There were all the artists themselves there, admiring their own pictures, in long flowing hair and ties. Some of them were most awfully excited about their own pictures, and behaved just like a pack of children. Some of the paintings were lovely, especially the landscapes, and a great many little Dutch interiors, of houses, of course! On the other hand, there were some simply dreadful things, and of course crowds of dreadful futurist and cubist things. We stayed there quite a long time, and then we went into the town, and I bought some Christmas presents. On the way back I was nearly run over by about six trams and half-a-dozen drays! It was most exciting, but everyone was quite disappointed that I didn't swoon and faint, and that sort of thing. . . .

. . . . . .

. . . Mdlle and Helen and I went off to the Cirque Charles to see the animals. They were lovely. It is supposed to be one of the biggest circuses in the world, and it really

was immense. There were over three hundred animals, and over ninety different waggons. . . .

Next to the lions were the camels and dromedaries. There were heaps and heaps of them. They didn't have cages at all. There was just a fence in front of them on our side, and on the other the whole side of the tent was open so they could see out and get the air. They were all lying down on great beds of straw, and of course they were all hobbled. They were so sweet, and they just loved having their noses scratched. My hand quite ached at the end, because they all wanted to be scratched, and there were quite twenty!

In a partition to itself was a sweet Mrs Camel with a two-year-old son called Joseph. They were darlings and they loved being scratched. We didn't see them being fed. At the end of the line, also in a partition to itself, was a poor sick white camel. It did look so sorry for itself. It had a coat on tied with string, and it was lying down with its head on a filthy pillow, but still it was sweet! Opposite the camels was a cage full of water

for seals. They were lovely, and had such lovely eyes. I simply couldn't imagine wearing one round my neck, they looked so dreadfully cold and damp. Next to the seals were seven elephants. They were dears, especially one little one which had a great sense of humour. It kept on filling its trunk with sawdust, which must have been horribly uncomfortable, and then it went up to a big elephant, and rubbed up against it, and pretended to be ever so affectionate, and then all of a sudden it would blow all the sawdust down the elephant's ear, and then rush back to its picket with a squeal. It really was killing. The big elephant got furious, and made the most unearthly bellowings and trumpetings, and presently a man came along and tickled the big elephant's trunk, and brandished a stick in front of the little elephant, and after that peace was restored. . . .

It was awfully funny to watch the different ways the animals behaved when they saw the food coming. The lions, of course, roared and walked up and down their cages and bit the bars, and so did the tigers. The bears had a

funny sort of swinging movement from side to side, and when they got very excited and hungry, they polished the floor with their fore-paws. It was very curious to watch them. They all did it, rubbing and rubbing as hard as they could. The elephants positively danced up and down, with a funny sort of swinging; the camels groaned and sighed and twitched their lips; the seals made sounds as if they were suffering from *mal de mer*; the horses whinnied; the llamas spat, and the yaks, etc., mooed and flicked their ears. It was so funny to watch them all.

. . . . . .

. . . The rest of us went to the Bois. . . . It was heavenly. There were very few people about, and as a result it was all very still and quiet. The trees were nearly all bare, and there were such lovely views through the branches, and in and out of the trunks. There was a lovely feel of Christmas in the air, and I'm sure the trees were feeling the same thing. They looked so sleepy and warm though the poor dears had no leaves. We saw a sweet little squirrel in one of the trees, who I sup-

pose, was getting ready his winter store-house. Everything looked as though it was waiting for something to happen, and something that it knew would happen. Even the ducks on the lake gave one the same idea.

CHAPTER II

BELGIAN REFUGEES

It was not long before the war touched Betty's life. Harrogate, like so many other towns, organised a Belgian Refugees' Committee to help to deal with the mass of refugees who began to pour into England in September 1914. On the 25th of that month she went up to town with her father and mother to help in selecting and bringing back some of the pitiful families who were temporarily camped out in the Alexandra Palace. On the 28th she came back to Harrogate in charge of a party of refugees, returning next day for another party, whom she brought back on the 30th. In this work she first made friends with Mr Henry J. Brice, who writes this appreciation of her :—

". . . I shan't forget the first meeting, how she looked me through and through

with head erect and half-closed eyes, got my measure, and finally put her hand in mine as a fast friend. I was working for the Belgian Refugee Fund, organising the transport from Alexandra Palace. . . . I had my car and chauffeur waiting outside, and Betty knew I was momentarily mad because a motor bus hadn't turned up to take three parties to various railway stations. Mrs Stevenson was there, and came to me and asked where Betty was, and I couldn't for the life of me tell her where, so I started a hunt. I found my car gone, and then one of the parties missing. It turned out that Betty had given the chauffeur instructions in my name, and dashed off with the refugees to Euston to catch their train. And the only apology she offered was: 'Well, you knew you could trust me, didn't you?' . . . If I had ever had an impossible task to do, I would have put Betty to do it. And what's more, by her personality she would have got people to help her, and if she failed a hundred times, you would have found her, head erect and smiling. . . . Her judgment was always sound, and her happy con-

fidence in herself irresistible. . . . She just put her heart and soul into the job in hand, no matter what it was.

"I got her the post of driver with the Y.M.C.A., but though it led to her untimely end, I know she wouldn't have me regret it, for she died, as she lived, the noblest and purest of souls. She has joined the ranks of those to whom humanity owes an immense debt.

"All they had hoped for, all they had they gave
To save Mankind; themselves they scorned to save."

Besides the refugees there was a group of wounded Belgians who had volunteered in the first days of the war, and who had been brought over to hospitals in Harrogate. There were international tea-parties in the big hall at Grey Gables, where they sang the "Brabançonne" and "Tipperary."

She kept up her music, practised much on her beloved Steinway, and began to teach herself Norwegian and Italian, with great success. Then after an attack of measles she went to Uxbridge to recuperate :—

". . . I am writing this on the lawn under a great big chestnut tree. It is simply heavenly. On Tuesday Molly and I went to Hampton Court. . . .

"The fields are full of ever such long grass, and heaps of buttercups and daisies and sorrel. They do look so nice. I long to go and rub my face in among them. At Twickenham we took another bus, which took us finally to Hampton Court.

"By this time we were pretty fam., although it was so early. So we went along to a shop. When we'd got thoroughly in and seated, we found that they didn't cater for lunches, only teas. However we couldn't be bothered to get up again, so we just ate what they'd got. First of all we discovered that there would be some meat pies in soon, so we said we'd wait. We waited ages; I suppose they couldn't catch the cat! So we set-to on something else. We had a large awfully good buttered currant scone. When we'd done that, the pies arrived mewing plaintively. We had one between us. Jolly good. They loved having their noses scratched, the bijoux.

"We then staggered forth to Hampton Court. Isn't it glorious? King Edward's horses are quartered in the barracks there. We saw quite a lot. First we went right through the Courts and out into the gardens. They were just lovely. I have never seen such gardens. All the beds had several things growing in them. The bed would be covered with some bright low-growing little flower, so that no earth could be seen, and then lovely tall pink and white tulips grew out of them. There was every conceivable colour and they all harmonised beautifully. It made me long to be able to play it. I know exactly what it was, if only my fingers would do what my mind wants.

"I bought a guide and then we went up the great staircase. It seemed putrid to be going up it in 1915. I did so want it to be the seventeenth century. I almost *saw* Charles and William and Mary walking about. The floor was stone. I wonder what they had it covered with. I'm sure they all got chilblains. The ceilings and walls were most gaudily painted with nymphs and satyrs, etc., and fat and overfed females, reclining on

round clouds in an ultramarine sky. Then there were other females with yellow hair and pink extremities, playing harps and lutes. This staircase led into the King's Guard Chamber. It was all decorated with arms (fire !) in the most wonderful patterns. The guide-book says there are nearly 3000 arms used.

"The next room was William III's Presence Chamber. There was a great big red canopy under which Willie used to sit. I wish I could have seen him. There were lovely pictures in all the rooms. In this room are the 'Hampton Court Beauties'; they are a bosomy crew! Some, however, were quite nice. Miss Pitt was sweet. There were heaps of rooms, all opening out of each other, which I won't describe. (You must be sick of this letter by this time.) King Willie's bedroom was thrilling. There was a huge moth-eaten four-poster covered with silk. I've forgotten the colour. The ceiling was painted with slumber scenes. There were sweet Pans whistling to drowsy goats, who were going to sleep on clouds with their heads on buttercups. There were fat females curled up in

shells and sleeping on Dryads' bosoms! It would give me a nightmare on the spot to lie in bed and look at all that. The Queen's bathroom was weird. There was just a big marble basin let into the wall, with one tap. Naughty, dirty ladies! Not like Betty. Cardinal Wolsey's closet was ever so small, and all oak-panelled. In one corner was a little door which let into a tiny little room with no window, like a big box. It was all wired off and we couldn't go in. It simply reeked of heads and secret stairways. Last of all we went into the Great Banqueting Hall of Harry's in a different building. It is huge, with great stained-glass windows, with the arms of Harry and his six spouses on them. I didn't know before that all his wives could trace their descent from Edward I, but it is so. Teddy I. had two wives, French and English. We heard all about the ghosts. One is Harry's last wife: she walks down the hall; looks out of the window; takes her head off and chucks it out of the window. She was the only[1] wife who wasn't executed, so

[1] She forgot Catharine of Aragon.

she probably does it out of pique, because she wasn't cut up too."

During this Uxbridge visit she amused herself with writing a little skit on a Charles Garvice novel, which had what she would call a *succès fou* among her friends in the trenches in 1917.

CHAPTER III

KESSINGLAND

THEN she went to Kessingland for a week with her mother and cousin, and went back again in August with her family for the summer holidays.

The mystery of all the naval operations brought the war a good deal nearer to her, as her diary shows.

DIARY

13th July 1915.

We are at Kessingland-on-Sea for a week. The place is rather nice, four miles from Lowestoft. I am writing in a little wooden shelter right on the edge of the cliff. It is open at the front, making a lovely big "view-finder." Quite a lot is going on at sea just now. Exactly in front of me a funnel and two masts are sticking up out of the water,

about half a mile out. These are the remains of a cargo steamer, which was torpedoed by a German submarine a few days ago. She was carrying a cargo of wheat, and is now slowly sinking on the sand banks. The submarine gave the crew time to get away, and some of the wheat was saved. The people at Kessingland saw it all happen, and saw the crew climbing into the boats. We are indeed living in stirring times when ships are torpedoed within a mile of land.

Six little mine-sweepers are patrolling up and down, cabled together and energetically steaming along. They remind me of a child's train puffing along with the little carriages chained on. Yet they are the bravest little ships on the sea, these mine-sweepers, and are doing a great work. The other day they got a submarine entangled in their nets, and the bodies are still being washed up on shore.

On the far horizon are two cruisers which every now and then come into sight and then disappear again. In the morning there are a lot of fishing smacks out, but they dare not go out very far.

There are two villages at Kessingland, one a bit inland, and the other a coast fishing village. Both are full of old men and boys with sunburnt faces and blue jerseys. There are no young men. . . .

I've just had a very good dinner, and we are all sitting in the hut again. The mine-sweepers have just gone by again, and each carries a mast headlight. They look so pretty, and yet they seem so much more important when it is beginning to get dark; they make one think of war, not of toy engines.

A big steamer is passing now, and she is just skirting round the sunk ship. She has two mast headlights, and she has left a long trail of ugly black smoke in the sky. It is beginning to get quite dark now, and the horizon is a black line. A soldier is walking along the beach playing a penny whistle, and throwing stones into the sea. I'm sure he is waiting for his best girl. She has kept him waiting nearly half an hour. I wish she would be quick.

There is a lovely smell of the sea here, and a seagull somewhere near is making such a sleepy

chirping noise. It is getting cold, so I am going in. . . .

14th July 1915.

We have just had a large breakfast, and are now sitting on the sands writing and digesting. We have just heard that a German submarine has been taken off Aldeburgh. We are all very excited about it.

Last night Mollie and I went for a walk along the cliffs as far as the coast-guard station. It was quite dark, and all the ships' lights out at sea looked so pretty. There was one big light which we were certain was signalling to another ship near by. It was a very big light. This morning Mr Banfield told us he had also seen it, and that at about 10.30 it had suddenly gone out. He was certain that something was up, and it was there that the submarine was caught.

There is such a pretty bush that grows on the cliffs here. It is like a privet with a purple star-shaped flower.

The family are bathing now and making a most unholy noise, especially my parent who persists in singing, " row, brothers, row."

The sea is lovely now. I think there is a storm brewing.

The sea is a dark purply-blue with bright green streaks. I think the green is over the sand banks which are guarded by two black and white buoys. The water looks hard though the horizon is blurred, and the buoys stand out very sharply from the water. It is just like an April day; bright sun and then lowering clouds.

Sitting here writing peacefully it is difficult to imagine the dreadful fighting that is going on just the other side of the water. We in England can talk about and discuss the war as much as we like, but we can't realise it. We look round and see the fields and villages and hamlets lying peacefully there, and we find it impossible to imagine what it must be like in Belgium—what we should feel like if our homes were ruined. The people of Scarborough and Hartlepool no doubt realise a little more what war is, and in big towns it is brought forcibly to our notice. But it is not the same thing, merely because we happen to be an island cut off from all the countries which are now in the thick of the fighting.

A Belgian wounded soldier recovering in England said it was extraordinary, the difference in the atmosphere of Belgium and England. That to see peaceful, quiet England made the horrors of Belgium seem like a terrible nightmare. Honour must indeed be a very sacred thing, if so much is being lost and risked for the sake of it, and it is not so difficult to sympathise with those who think that honour is a very secondary consideration, when human lives are at stake. And yet we are fighting splendidly, because we are fighting for our country's honour. We haven't a great army, or rather we hadn't, and yet we are doing great things. Germany has a great and efficient army, but she has no ideal to fight for, and the result is painfully and terribly obvious. . . .

We had heard that morning that four more Lowestoft trawlers had been torpedoed. It seems to me a coward's way of fighting. . . .

9th August 1915.

Last night there was great excitement because we had a Zeppelin over us. . . . At

last I got out into the garden, and there I saw the Zeppelin sailing straight for us. It flew right over our heads, and then over the house, where it seemed to rest a few seconds, and then it changed its course and headed straight for Lowestoft. It flew very quickly and seemed to me to be just the size of a cigar held at arm's length. It was very long and narrow. By this time it was discovered by various females and fussy-buttons that I had bare feet, and had a white wrap on, which, there was no doubt, was illuminating the whole countryside, and was pointing out to the Germans the direction of Lowestoft!—so I was herded back to my room. Once there, I did not get back to bed again, as was insisted on by some one, but put shoes and stockings and one or two garments on, and also one of Daddy's big coats. This done, I repaired once more to the scene of action. On the stairs I heard a big explosion which shook the house, and when I got out into the garden again I heard some more. These were bombs being thrown on Lowestoft. There were a great many flashes of light and

big flares, and by this time the searchlights of Lowestoft were going—two from the pier, and one or two from two gunboats which are at Lowestoft. We saw some of the bombs being dropped. There was a flash from the Zeppelin when it was thrown, and then a big explosion and flare of light when the thing touched the earth. All this went on for some time, and then the noise of the Zeppelin gradually died away, and very soon afterwards the searchlights were stopped, and everything was once more quite quiet and dark again.

When she came back to Harrogate, she took over with her friend, Mrs Wedgwood, the charge of nine of the Belgian families, and she did her best to be guide, counsellor, and friend to them.

She also took lessons in motor-driving, in the hope that it would help her to do some war work later on.

CHAPTER IV

THE TWO SHIPS

This little rhymeless poem was written at Kessingland. It is inserted here because Betty's Vision of Life is in it, and has brought great consolation to those who loved her.

The moon was pale, the night was dark,
Scarce a sound disturbed the air,
Save the fitful cry of a sad sea-bird,
And the ceaseless break of the waves.

I sat alone by the sea that night,
And my heart was troubled and sore,
For my loved one had gone to the wars to fight,
And when shall I see him again ?

Shall I ever see him again, I ask
Of the waves and the sad sea-bird.
And the waves they broke on the shingly beach,
" No more, no more ! " they sighed.

The wind blew round me in hungry gusts,
And the rain began to fall.

I gazed on the sea and the cold black sky,
And a weird sight met my eyes.

A ship as black as a raven's wing
Came sailing by in the night.
At the helm stood a figure in shrouded garb,
A mysterious, ghostly sight.

My heart grew weak, and I strove to speak,
But no sound I made, nor sigh.
The ship sailed on, and nearer it came,
And the wind moaned dismally still.

I raised my eyes, and looked at that ship,
And trembled at what I saw.
The figure in black looked over the sea,
And met my terrified eyes.

Its face was covered, and yet its eyes
Seemed to pierce through mine to my brain,
" Look well, look well, O human soul,
And see what I have done."

So speaking it moved its shrouded head,
And pointed into the ship.
I looked and saw, oh, woe is me,
The figure of him I loved.

I sank me down upon my knees,
" Ah no, ah no ! " I cried,
" Good God ! " I prayed in agony,
" Eternal Father, save."

The figure laughed full loud and long,
" 'Tis well, 'tis well ! " it cried,
" Come, look on him you loved so well,
And see what I have done.

" I am the lord of all that is,
'Tis useless thus to pray.
Acknowledge me as lord of all,
I am the God of Death."

" I'll never bow to thee," I cried.
" For life, not death, I pray."
I raised my head and looked again,
And lo, the ship had gone.

The sea-bird flew around my head,
The waves broke mournfully,
And the wind moaned still its doleful dirge,
As I walked along the shore.

The morning came, and the sun rose high,
And the birds began to sing.

But I laid me down with a heavy heart,
And closed my weary eyes.

I thought of that ghostly God of Death,
And the ship, and the face I loved,
When I heard a voice which seemed to say,
"Courage, there is no death."

"There is no God of Death," it said,
And it whispered soft in my ear,
"The world is full of life and love,
There is no room for death."

I got me up from off my couch,
For I knew that the voice spoke true,
And my heart felt light, and my heart felt gay,
For I knew that there was no death.

I lived that day with a cheerful mind,
And sang with the birds in the sun,
And saw in every blossom and bud
A thought of the God of Life.

The sun went down, and the moon crept up,
And once more I sat by the sea.
A nightingale sang in the woods beyond,
And the waves softly lapped round my feet.

I gazed around on the moonlit sea,
And up to the starry sky.
And everywhere I looked, I saw
The face of the God of Life.

And out at sea I saw a ship,
A ship of purest gold,
At the helm stood a figure in flowing robes,
With a sword of gold in his hand.

The ship drew near, and nearer still,
And I gazed on the wonderful sight,
And I knew as I watched this golden ship
That this was no God of Death.

The figure raised the sword in his hand,
And pointed into the ship.
" I am the God of Life " he said,
" Fear not, but follow me."

I stood me up by the lapping waves,
And I held out my arms to the ship;
And the figure in white with the flaming sword
Came to me over the sea.

He took my hand, and led me out
Over the rippling sea,

And I saw in that ship of purest gold
The figure of him I loved.

He held my hand, and we both knelt down
And worshipped the God of Life,
And we both of us knew in the ship that night
That there was no God of Death.

Side by side on that golden ship
We gazed out over the sea,
And far away in the dimness of night
We saw another ship.

Her sails were torn, and her rigging bent,
As she sank down under the sea.
At the helm crouched a figure: a cry rent the air,
As the ship sank under the sea.

And I knew that the ship that had gone in the night
Was the ship of the God of Death.
And we sailed away in our ship of gold,
Our ship of the God of Life.

The birds were singing above my head,
And the sun was shining bright,

THE TWO SHIPS

As I woke and turned on my mossy bank,
And I looked at the happy day.

And then I remembered my ships of the night,
And the God of Life, and of Death.
And I rubbed my eyes and looked at the sea,
Knowing my dream was right.

And the sea-birds gay flew over the waves,
And circled around my head,
And the birds, and the waves on the shingly beach,
Sang to the God of Life.

And I knew that death disappears before life,
As the ship had sunk in the night,
And my loved one was safe, and would come to me soon,
And the birds, and the waves on the shingly beach
Sang "Soon, oh God of Life!"

B. G. Stevenson.

August 1915.

CHAPTER V

A STORY OF CHRISTMAS

Written by Betty at Christmas 1915.

It was Christmas Eve, and the streets of the great city were silent, save for the gentle, drowsy sound of the falling snow. In the big houses the rich people were laughing and happy, preparing for the great feast of to-morrow. Outside in the snow a woman was standing with a child in her arms. She stood looking up at the lights of the great house. Seeing an open window, she moved nearer, and looked in, holding the child up, so that it could feel the glow of the light and the warm fire on its half-frozen little body.

In front of the fire in the big room the woman saw a lot of children. They were sitting very still, and were evidently listening to someone who was telling them a story.

The woman moved nearer, in order to hear the story to which the children were listening.

"And it was Christmas time, and the snow was falling, and everything was very cold and white, just like it is now. And the poor woman and her little baby had no home to go to, and no fire to warm themselves by, like you have. And at last, after a long time, they came to an inn, but alas! there was no room for them there either."

The woman outside in the snow gave a little cry, and began to move slowly away. From the house she heard children's voices and laughter, and presently the big door opened, and a blaze of light shot out, illuminating the snow and the poor woman standing there with her baby. The children came out and got into the motors and carriages that were waiting for them, and were driven away to their homes, where there were fires and good things to eat, and warm things to wear. The door of the big house closed, and the woman was alone again. She moved away, pulling her poor cloak more closely round the child, and was soon out of sight, away into the snow.

Outside the great city everything was even more quiet, and the moors and the woods, with their still, white covering of snow, lay there, waiting for the great day of rejoicing and happiness.

Away across the moors a little light twinkled and shone out across the snow. This was the hut of old Shuan. Shuan was a poor man who made his living by fishing. But now the rivers and pools were all frozen, and there were no fish to be had. It was night time, and the moon and the stars shone down on the snow, and on the path from the woods, causing the snow to glitter and glisten like a world of fairy diamonds.

Presently the stillness was broken by the sound of someone walking through the snow. A man was coming down the path from the woods. He was clad in a loose shepherd's cloak, which he was trying to hold together to keep some of the cold away. He was walking very slowly, and he looked sad and weary.

He walked on through the snow, and across the moors till he came to the hut of old Shuan,

the fisherman. Outside the window he paused, and looked in. A miserable fire of peat and damp sticks was smouldering in the grate, and in front of it were sitting old Shuan and his dog Shemus, and he was reading out of a book. The man outside in the snow stepped nearer and listened.

" And the angel said unto them, ' Fear not ; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

" ' For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

" ' And this shall be a sign unto you : Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.'

" And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, ' Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.' "

The old man got up and moved slowly to the window. He held out his hand to Shemus, and patted his head, and together they looked out over the snow into the moonlight.

Then Shuan spoke : " Shemus, it is Christ-

mas. A time of joy and thanksgiving. I feel sad and old, and this is my last Christmas. It is not for you and me to feast with good things. Times are bad, Shemus, and we are poor and old. We have read, and on this our last Christmas let us read again, of that first joyous Christmastide, when the child Jesus came to earth."

The man outside in the snow held out his arms to Shuan, and smiled. He moved towards the door, and opened it and went in. He walked up to Shuan, and laid his hand on the old man's shoulder. Shuan looked up and smiled at the man.

"Who are you?" he said.

The man from the woods answered: "My trade is the same as your own, Shuan. I am a fisherman."

"Ah, times are bad, and it is many weeks since the snow came, and froze up the rivers, so that I cannot fish."

"The snow and the frost," replied the strange man, "do not affect my fishing, Shuan."

"Stranger," trembled Shuan, "I am afraid.

I understand not your speech. It is Christmas time, when everything is full of joy. I am old and feeble, and Christmas has no good things in store for me." The old man bowed his head.

The stranger got up and took Shuan by the hand. "Come with me," he said, "and I will show you the true Christmas. You are a fisher of fish, Shuan, but I am a fisher of men."

Old Shuan, trembling, got up, and was led to the door by the stranger. He opened the door, and, as a blast of icy cold air rushed in, old Shuan hung back, afraid. But the stranger reassured him, and together they walked out into the starlit night.

Suddenly Shuan felt no longer afraid. He looked up at the strange man and laughed. His limbs felt strong and healthy, and he knew he was young again. He looked again at the man by his side, and saw that his face was no longer sad and weary, but was smiling and full of joy. Shuan held his hand, and felt the warmth from the stranger entering into his own body and filling his whole being

with a new and wonderful sense of happiness. Presently the stranger stopped and listened, and Shuan heard a sound like a child's voice. He looked back, and saw a beautiful woman coming towards him with a child in her arms. She was smiling at the strange man, and as she came nearer he stretched out his hands to her. The child sat up in the woman's arms, and laughed at Shuan, and held out its hands to him. Shuan laughed too, and kissed the child. Suddenly the air all around was filled with music and the ringing of bells. It was Christmas morning, Shuan knew. He turned toward the woman and the man, and together they moved away into the great white woods, and gradually the music grew softer, as Shuan, a look of joy on his face, walked away with the woman and the Fisher of Men.

Christmas morning came with the ringing of bells and the sound of music. The snow sparkled on the trees in the woods and on the moors, and the sun shone on the hut of old Shuan the fisherman.

A robin, hungry for the crumbs that were always outside the hut on Christmas morning, hopped on to the window sill, with a sprig of holly in its beak. It flew in to where old Shuan, with Shemus the dog, were sitting. Shuan was asleep in his chair, an open book on his knees, and a smile of perfect happiness on his face. The little bird dropped the sprig of holly into Shuan's lap, and then flew away to tell everyone how happy old Shuan looked, although he was asleep, on Christmas morning.

B. G. Stevenson.

Christmas, 1915.

CHAPTER VI

ST DENIS

Early in January 1916 one of her aunts went to France to manage a Y.M.C.A. Canteen, and Betty was very anxious to join her. At first it seemed as if she would not be able to go, as she was only nineteen, which was considered too young. At last, however, she got her permit, and after a false alarm in the shape of a hurried departure to London with instructions to be ready to go to France, and a sad return home, Betty at last got her papers in order and started off to France, escorted by her father, on Friday, the 11th February.

Her letters and diary speak for themselves about her work, and her love of it, and the great pleasure and joy she found in being able to brighten the lot of the men for whom she worked so hard.

The passage was very rough, and Betty

was never a good sailor. But nothing could diminish her joy in her great adventure, and her diary and letters are full of it. Who but Betty would have idealised "the friendly, insatiable little basin," or the life-saving waistcoat she had to wear, "in case Kaiser Billy's little sailormen might have something to say to us"? Her first letter to her mother the next day begins: "Everything is too heavenly for words."

Here are her impressions of Havre in wartime:—

"Havre looked just the same. I somehow imagined it would look different. Only there wasn't the usual civilian crowd watching the arrival of the steamer. There were several English Tommies and officers on the quay, several blousy porters, and lots of French soldiers. In the background was a tall, black-moustached French official, with his arms folded, watching everything.

"In the street behind the douane a little boy went by whistling 'Tipperary,' and several Tommies were trying to talk to a girl in front of a shop window. . . . When

everything was still, we got off, and went to the douane.

"It was a fair-sized room with a long table running down the middle of it. Behind the table sat six officials—three bearded French ones, and three clean-shaven English ones. The passport passed down the table and so did I, and out at a door the other side. I felt I was going through a sausage machine, and as I came out of the door, a full-fledged sausage, I gazed back on the long rows of pigs and felt sorry for them.

"We got a fiery-moustached little man who began washing his hands among my clothes. I produced my Y.M.C.A. brassard and he smiled and closed my trunk and said: 'Oh, c'est bien, mademoiselle, c'est bien, si j'avais su, mademoiselle, vous savez . . .' and he waved his arms about and was no end of a wid."

Next day, the 12th February, she joined her aunt in the little hotel in the Boulevard Magenta, which was to be her home, and on the 14th she started her work at the St Denis Canteen.

Hotel Magenta,
Boulevard Magenta, Paris,
Wednesday, 16th February 1916.

Darling,—My letters all begin the same, namely, that everything here is too divine for words. Apparently I must say hardly anything about the camp, or the work, so I hope you won't mind. It will all go into a diary anyhow. However here is a time-table of what we do. We go up there every morning and afternoon alternately.

* * * * *

9.15 to 9.45.—Made my supper, ate it, read and smiled.

10.30 to 11.—Bed, and sleep like a pig.

* * * * *

4 p.m.—Made my tea and bought éclairs and other glorious things just round the corner.

6 p.m.—Am writing this!

7.15.—Shall go down the Boulevard to Duval's for dinner.

9.—When we like, sit and talk flowery French in the drawing-room with Madame and the other lodgers.

It really is a lovely existence. . . .

. . . Now I want to say something *really* important. Alice leaves in five weeks. Now I simply refuse to leave before my three *mois* are up, and I can stay longer if I ask Mr Coleman. I want you to ask anyone you think would come out to fill up Alice's place immediately she goes, and who would take on her room here. Well, look round for someone, there's a wid. . . . It is a fair work and the tram service is awful, and you do want someone who can be cheerful and understanding up there.

I do think Paris is too lovely for words—better even than Brussels, but I expect that's because I've got something real to do. I've just the comfortable time to lounge and shop and be lazy in, and just the right time to work in. There isn't too much of either. At the same time, the work is so interesting that I'd give up the lazing if I had to, though I think then I *should* be tired. At present I'm just right, and feeling as fit as a fiddle. It is lovely.

There are two very nice menials here,

Lucie and Louis. Louis does all the bedrooms, answers your bell, makes the bed, and sometimes brings up your brekker. He puts in a corner things he thinks ought to go to the wash, and he has his own ideas as to how my frocks and coats should hang, and if I alter them, he always puts them back. He is such a wid. I hope this epistle isn't censored. *Please tell me if it is.*

"Up there" they *are* all so nice and grateful. Last night someone played the violin and I played the accompaniment.

The Gare du Nord is so interesting, though very sad. All the time there are soldiers either going back to the front, or going home on leave.

It is nice to feel you're wanted. Both Alice and Madame are too sweet for words.

I must stop now, we're going down to Duval's.—Love from your little BETTY.

It was not long before the work got more strenuous.

Hotel Magenta,
Boulevard Magenta,
Paris, *24th February* 1916.

Darling little Wids,—I'm so sorry I've been such a long time writing, but I really haven't had time. I'm living what Jars would call "Some Life,"and I've never enjoyed myself so much before. Auntie says I'm enjoying it so because I'm working so hard. I know I am, but the fact is, the work's the nicest part. I've made heaps of friends up there! *Toutes sortes* and all castes. I'm longing to write reams about it all, but Alice says it's awfully risky, as letters very often go back, and so I'm not taking any risks.

Well, I don't really know where to begin with other news, there's been so much happening. Last Sunday (or Saturday—I've lost all count of time) there was a Zeppelin alarm. I told you in one letter how the *pompiers* and the *clairons* go round. Some of us were sitting in the Salon, it was about 9.20 p.m., and Alice and I had just come in from our afternoon shift, when Louis, the nice valet,

dashed in and said that a gendarme had been to tell us to put down our shutters, as it had come through that two Zepps. had succeeded in passing over the French lines, in the direction of Paris. There was great excitement, and all our shutters were put down, and when we looked out of the window all the street lights had been turned out. All this was called an *alerte*. The *pompiers* and Co. only go when the little birds are within a certain distance of Paris. Several of the people here went upstairs and dashed their valuables into a bag, and then stood dithering in the hall. There is one old lady here of eighty-four, and her son. They are French refugees from somewhere, and their house is full of Germans. They had to escape at the last moment. The poor old lady always has her valise packed ready, and when she heard the *alerte* she sent her son for it.

Madame Christophe and I went on to the roof to see the *projections*, but there weren't any. We saw an aeroplane dashing off somewhere. It was a lovely clear night, and it was snowing. We looked right out over Paris

and the avenues of roofs, all getting gradually whiter and whiter in the snow. It was simply wonderful, everything seemed to be waiting—as indeed it was. I shall never forget standing away up there, waiting for the Zeppelins, and looking right over Paris in the snow.

We came down and found Louis had got fresh news, that the Zepps. were coming to Paris, two of them. We then adjourned to the cellar. I say cellar, but catacombs is a better word—vaulted passages, which we all threaded our way through with the help of a lantern, and finally emerged into a fair-sized room which was fitted with electric light. As a result of previous raids, it was furnished with a table with a red cloth, a sofa, a chair, and a high plank balanced on two barrels. Round two sides were shelves filled with wine. In one corner was a heap of apples, and behind me a great heap of potatoes. Washing lines were hung from wall to wall, from which dangled linen, tablecloths, curtains, stockings and everything you can imagine.

The old lady was presented with the chair

and a little footstool, and rugs over her, and her son stood beside her with a valise in one hand and a blue and red carpet bag in the other. He joked and was cheerful the whole time, and kept on encouraging his mother. On the sofa was an English girl in her night-clothes and a coat over them, and next her another woman and a boy about fourteen, also French refugees from the same place as the other two. Then came me, perched up on the planks, with my head among the washing and my feet resting on a pile of potatoes. I was dressed all right, as I'd just come in from the camp. Then came Alice.

Louis kept on coming in with news. It was too funny for words really, in spite of its being rather frightening. We stayed there over an hour, and then as no *pompiers* had gone, we concluded the lil' birds must have been stopped. Alice and I led, and gradually one by one we dispersed through the stone corridors of that unwholesome cellar. When we finally arrived in the hall, Alice and I went in to Mme Christophe's office and had a large meal, composed of wine, biscuits and

mandarines. Then we came to bed at 12.45. The lights were still out all over Paris, so I slept in a good many of my garments. Next morning you can imagine what we felt like when we heard the news. I suppose your papers were full of it? Two Zeppelins and four Aviatiks en route for Paris were stopped by the French aeroplanes. One Zepp. fell to the ground, the other damaged, and one Aviatik brought down and the others forced to turn. I've never been so excited over war news before. All Paris was literally exulting. I must say I feel safer here than in England, though it will probably egg them on to revenge. (I've just remembered all this happened last Saturday night, 19th February.)

On Sunday morning we went off to the Palais Royale, which is now a hospital, to see Mme Trouette who is nursing there. It used to be a great Course Hippique, and you go through avenues of stables to get upstairs to the wards. The huge circus is now a sort of main street. Mme Trouette wasn't there, but we walked round the ward and spoke to some of the soldiers and infermières.

Then we went to see the Musée d'Armée, where they had heaps of German guns and aeroplanes, and then on to Napoleon's tomb. It was simply wonderful; I can't describe it. It's like standing in the circle of the theatre and looking right away down into the pit, and there you see the huge brown wooden coffer. I wonder what Napoleon would have said to see all those people silently gazing down into his tomb? I think he would like it.

Paris is suiting me better than any place I've ever been in. It's extraordinary. I sleep like a top all night, and feel like a lion all day, no matter how hard the work up there. I'm doing everything I ought, and I've actually got red cheeks! We go up there by a tram which starts from just across the road, and we come back the same way. We often have to wait hours for a tram, and then hang on to a step by the skin of our teeth, while the conductress punches you and tries to knock you off. They really are awful Amazons.

I'm getting to know Paris ever so well now, and the more I know the more I love it.

I went to Cook's on Monday for my chink, but it hadn't come, but I got it yesterday.

Alice and I live quite independently, and we join forces when we want to. Of course I don't mean to say I go trapezing about with strange youths, but I go about by myself, and I always wear my brassard, which means that I can go anywhere.

Now I'm going to jump into bed. I've had only two little letters from you since I left home! Write soon.—Your loving Widlet,

BUNÇIE.

P.S.—Auntie's been out all the afternoon and evening, and I've been writing so hard, I forgot all about dinner till 8.30. Places close at 8. I'm having chocolate, bread and camembert, biscuits and mandarines up here in my room, 10.45. Some life, as I said, and I'm as fit as a fiddle. I shall get up at 11.30 to-morrow, lunch at 12, then real lovely hard work and the knowledge that everyone is saying and thinking nice things about you, and is grateful for what you are doing. They tell about their families, and come for advice

when they have tummy-aches. I do love them all, especially *some*!!

Next morning.—At 12 last night there was another *alerte* plus the *pompiers*. I vaguely heard it, but was half asleep and didn't bother. There's nowt int' papers, so I think it was a false alarm.

HOTEL MAGENTA,
BOULEVARD MAGENTA,
PARIS, 28*th February* 1916.

DARLING MOTHER,—Thanks ever so for your lovely long letter, and the photo of Jark, and the Belgian Report which I got yesterday morning.

Now about the subject of food. . . . I'm never hungry and I always have enough to eat. . . . I often go without tea, but that ought to please you and Paw, especially the latter! And then I have all the better appetite for dinner. Here's to-day's programme. (I'm writing this just before going to bed.)

9.20.—Breakfast in bed, *i.e.* cup of chocolate,

chunk of bread, two brioches and butter and apricot jam. . . .

2 p.m.—Bowl of soup, three cakes, mandarines and chocolate, eaten off an overturned crate for a table, behind the counter of the canteen ! (lovely).

. . . Sometimes when we are working up there in the afternoon there is such a rush that we haven't time for an evening meal, therefore when we get back I always have something in my room. I buy two slices of ham and some mandarines—get a chunk of bread and some chocolate granules from Madame—spread out my nightgown for a table-cloth—make the chocolate and have a fine meal. What more could you want ? I don't want sardines and things. I like the slices of ham I buy, wrapped up in newspaper, two slices for 50 c. . . .

One of the soldiers up there is French and no end of a wid. He's lent me heaps of French books. I go home from the camp with my arms full of books and albums ! So far they have all been quite *convenable*. If I find one

that isn't—I shall just take it back and say that I haven't had time to read it. I'm reading one now called "La Jolie Infirmière." It's extremely knutty and very exciting, all about this war. I've also got "Le Portrait d'Aimée," and "Mignon," the Opera.

Betty's aunt had to come back to England, and the question of a successor was solved by her mother deciding to come out.

Hotel Magenta,
Boulevard Magenta, Paris,
7th March (Shrove Tuesday).

Darling Mother,—What perfectly lovely news. You simply can't think how excited I am about your coming out here. Of course you'll do the work splendidly. . . .

Don't imagine you won't want pretty clo'; you will, so bring all you've got. . . . Life isn't all composed of blue overalls and brown boots. Bring lots of overalls for the work, but not ugly ones. You've no idea how "they" *love* to see something pretty. They're dead sick of uniforms, I can tell you. . . .

You don't see any shabby people about here. They know that everything is so sad, but that it doesn't help anyone to look miserable and shabby. There's no silly extravagance, but every woman tries to be as cheerful and make herself look as pretty as she can, and there's more war work being done. Everyone's *infirmière*.

Write soon.—Your loving

WUG.

You will love the work, and the appreciation of it.

GRAND HOTEL MAGENTA,
129 BOULEVARD MAGENTA, PARIS.

DARLING MOTHER,—What a long time since I've written to you, but as you will have got Alice's letter by now you will know that I've been *grippée*. I'm all right now, and would have gone out to-day if it hadn't been raining. Everybody at the camp has it or has had it, so now that I've got mine over, I can march ahead. The weather is very difficult to know —one day it is so hot, like summer, and the next day snow. But I'm learning.

Oh, I am looking forward to your coming, and I know you'll love it. . . .

Love.

BUNÇIE.

A. W. T. S.

HOTEL MAGENTA,
BOULEVARD MAGENTA, PARIS.

DARLING,—What a long time since I've heard from you, but you must be frightfully busy. . . . Oh! I am looking forward to seeing my wid again. You're to swear to bring J-A-R-S, and we'll get him in here. . . . Donal's coming. Shan't we all smile? . . . Be sure and wear your brassard at Havre, because the customs won't bother you then. . . .

A. thinks I've had a breakdown as well. I've simply had *la grippe*—species of flu, which every soul is suffering from. I've had it quite thoroughly, as I always do get things, and now I'm all right.

Write soon.—Your little

BUNÇIE.

Love and a hug to the Wid.

A. W. T. S.

CHAPTER VII

HER MOTHER JOINS HER

I WENT out to join Betty on 30th March. Fortunately my plans for going out on the torpedoed *Sussex* had to be altered, and I went a week later. It is almost like a dream now to remember what crossing the Channel meant in those days.

I shall not forget my arrival at the little hotel, about 10 p.m., walking into the room where Betty sat eating her supper. My journal says: "Dear thing, she did look so sweet, tho' very pale. She fell into my arms and hugged me and said, 'You look about thirteen, and I love your hat,' which pleased me very much."

We had at first two tiny rooms looking into a narrow cobbled street. The noise of passing traffic was terrific, especially at night, when huge convoys of every description passed.

Betty's room was a mass of "things." We moved very soon into one big two-bedded room, which had a tiny sitting-room opening out of it, about eight feet by six feet, and it was lovely to be able to keep Betty a little more comfortable, and look after her meals. She owned that she had got rather tired of eating a slice of *Jambon de Yorck* for her supper, "sitting on the edge of the bed and using my nightdress case as a plate." The hotel could provide no meals except *petit déjeuner*.

Naturally, after my arrival, Betty's letters home were much less frequent. She was tired, and I wrote most of the letters home.

On Saturday, 1st April, I got my permit, and started working in the canteen with Betty, and I'm sure no two people were ever so happy as she and I were that day.

The Y.M.C.A. Hut where we worked was a few miles due north of Paris, in a very poor and not too reputable suburb. It was set in the middle of a cinder-laid compound, and was surrounded by M.T. workshops, in which were motor-lorries and motor-waggons

of every description, and wounded cars sent down from the Front for repair.

In our early days we used occasionally to get a lift back to our hotel in a car that happened to be going that way, but very shortly after I joined Betty, conditions in the camp became very different, and this was no longer done. One other lady shared the work of the hut with us. We used to work in alternating morning and evening shifts, *i.e.* one day Betty and I worked from after breakfast until 2.30 or 3.30, and the next day we worked from 5 to about 10.

Here let me try with a feeble pen to give some glimpse of the happiness we had inside that hut. It was absolutely the one bit of brightness in the men's lives there. It stood for home, and the decencies and amenities of home, and we knew it, and it helped us to keep going. I know it can be said of countless Y.M.C.A. Huts all through these past four and a half years, that they were little lifeboats on a vast sea of warfare, but I can never think that in any spot in the whole of the war area was a hut so needed as ours was.

When Betty and her aunt first went out, the hut was very ill-equipped. The only stove was at the opposite end to the counter, the water seldom boiled, and every drop of it had to be carried from one end of the hut to the other. After some weeks a real pukka stove was got, and " several miles " of piping were fetched triumphantly from a big stores in Paris by Betty and her aunt, driven out in triumph to the camp, and fixed up by the men.

We were helped by a wonderful little French woman, one of those capable, smart, attractive little heart-of-gold French women one meets all over France, beyond my pen to describe. Her husband had been killed in 1915, and she had one little girl. She could do everything, apparently, and do it well. The men loved to teach her English slang, and were enchanted when she called them " saucy puss."

Getting to and from our camp was simply a nightmare. We waited any time from half an hour to an hour and a half in all weathers at a corner close to our hotel for the tram, which was nearly always crowded, and

we generally had to "sit on someone's figure" as Betty described it. After the night shift they had stopped running, and we had to walk about two miles to the nearest *Ceinture* Station, and get a train which crawled round Paris, and finally deposited us at the Gare du Nord. Walking through the station we had to be careful not to step on sleeping *Poilus en permission*, lying anywhere they could, dead asleep, coated with mud and laden with kit, straight from the trenches, country men perhaps, sleeping before they caught a train out of Paris. There were no benches for them. It was very late when we got home, and there were rough crowds about, but no one ever spoke rudely to us. We wore no uniform then, only our Y.M.C.A. brassards. It is true a wag once shouted to Betty, "*ee grec.—M.—C.—A.! Association de jeunes hommes Chrétiens!* Oh, shocking!" We used to climb the long flights of stairs to our room and flop on to our beds and sleep the sleep of the weary until it was time for tea or *petit déjeuner*, according to the time of shift.

There were French windows opening out

on to the noisiest Boulevard in Paris, but there was a chestnut tree just outside, in whose branches a pair of pigeons built, on a level with our windows. Electric trams ran by, and as we were at the junction of four main roads converging on the Gare du Nord, the noise can be better imagined than described. But we always slept through it all. We both carry in our minds many pictures framed in that window. Joffre and Poincaré driving by together, convoys, endless funerals, crowds carrying bunches and wreaths of box on the *jour des morts*, more crowds, moved as only French can be, on the day of Galliéni's funeral. In the night, the clatter of horses' hoofs, and the passing of a company of *cuirassiers*, the lights shining on their brass-helmets with their horse-tails. They always made us think of the little French *Duc* in "Trilby," the friend of little Billee. And on Sundays, lots of our own men walking about and making the most of Paris leave.

It soon became clear that, with the best will in the world, we should not be able to hold out unless there were a better way of

getting in and out to the camp, and especially as the weather grew hot and our feet became more and more like hot bricks. We therefore set about raising £150 to buy a second-hand Ford car. Kind friends at home gave £100 of this, and the Y.M.C.A. contributed the remaining £50. Betty soon picked up its ways, and drove it, and we took a new lease of life. Instead of arriving weary and breathless at our work and crawling back at night, we had the rush through the air to revive us. During the rest of the day the car was used at the Y.M.C.A. Headquarters. The old sentries at the Barrier were much amused the first time we passed there in the Ford, and Betty loved calling out "*Armée Anglaise!*" as we went through, and hearing one sentry reply: "*Tiens—tiens—tiens!*"

Betty's young brother came out to spend the Easter holidays helping at the canteen. At the end of April the camp had a great outburst of measles. Men would come in cheerfully, put a hand across the counter, give us a shake and say: "Well, good-bye Miss, I've got it, and I'm off to hospital in

Rouen." It was perhaps not surprising that Betty and Arthur both got the "fashionable complaint." The canteen was closed, as the hut was "out of bounds," and the next fortnight was spent away from work while I nursed the two patients who were looked after by the kindest of M.O.s from the camp, who lent us an ambulance later on, so that we were able to take the air without infecting other people. There was a good deal of flute-playing at this time, and a good many jokes, and we were all three very happy in spite of measles.

On 15th May the hut was re-opened, and Betty and I went up in the car and started work again.

To her Father

Hotel Magenta,
Boulevard Magenta, Paris,
20th May 1916.

Darling little Dumpos,—We're working again now, and it is so nice to be back. The men are such wids, and the day we opened the place was crammed, and we sold out everything. They all said such pretty things,

and one old boy said : " If anyone ever says anything against the Y.M.C.A. again, I'll hit him."

The car's going finely, and I do it all on my own now, including oiling. I'm going to clean it when I've time. Fords are going steadily up in price. While out in her, three people have asked if she was for sale, as they were looking everywhere for second-hand Fords. The people at the camp agree that they are the thing for army work. Light on tyres and petrol. She's got a perfect engine, really a find. It has been such a boon to us. The weather is stifling and we'd never have borne the trams. In the afternoons I often do commissions for the Y.M.C.A. in Paris. I'm really nobby at traffic now ! While we were in quarantine we went out in Capt. Rankin's ambulance. We used to go to the Bois and feed the ducks and swans. For 10c. you got a large chunk of bread from an old woman with a moustache any major might have envied. Did you know ducks could beg ? Well, I made them. If you threw a piece of bread up in the air, the ducks all stood on their tails and pawed the surface

with their feet. They were sweet. The other night Captain Rankin took Jars and me out. I expect Jars told you . . . we had a box at the Alhambra. It was a ripping show. Ventriloquists, singers, dancers, trick bicyclists, impersonators, and a man with a performing alligator. It was such a darling, and he was horribly harsh to it; kept on beating its nose. Still, I suppose you can't be too gentle and tender with a crocodile, or it might find *you* tender. . . .

Ever so many loves and hugs.—Your wayward

BUNÇIE.

T. L. I. W. Y.

All these days we had to do double shifts, as the new workers had not yet come. It was fearfully hot.

Y.M.C.A.
c/o ARMY POST OFFICE, S.5,
BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE,
26th May 1916.

DARLING DUMPOS,—We've been having it

so hot we could hardly breathe, but it is much cooler now. . . .

This morning I oiled and greased the car up at the garage, which necessitated taking up the floor boards, and sitting perched upon the seat with all the machinery underneath me, instead of the floor. It's very exciting and you get gloriously messy and covered with oil, and altogether it's fine. . . . I must stop now, wid dear, as we're going out.

Good-bye, darling.

BUNCH.

CHAPTER VIII

HER MOTHER'S JOURNAL

Thursday, 16th June.

I HAD to-day a letter from Lady Bessborough thanking me for what Betty and I had done at St Denis—with a special message from Princess Helena Victoria. I was so bucked, and it was nice to get it at a time like this, when life was not too easy, and we had to get to and from our work once more as best we could, while the car was being mended. . . .

Y.M.C.A.

Recreation Huts at the Base Camps in France

Hon. Secretary—COUNTESS OF BESSBOROUGH

23 BRUTON STREET,
LONDON, W., *12th June* 1916.

DEAR MRS STEVENSON,—I am delighted with your interesting letter of the 4th. It

is such a pleasure to have such an enthusiastic account as you give of your work in France for the last six months.

H.H. Princess Helena Victoria is greatly interested, and she and our Committee are most grateful to you and your daughter for the magnificent work you have done in the Y.M.C.A. Hut at St Denis.

Yours sincerely,

B. Bessborough.

Sunday, 18th June.

To-day we were both going out to the Scottish Women's Hospital at the Abbaye de Royaumont. But poor old Bet felt so tired I couldn't get her to say she'd go, though I felt certain a day in the fresh air would do her a heap of good. So I had sadly to leave her behind and in bed.

It was a divine day. We got to the entrance of the glorious Abbey and walked into the cloisters, at one end of which the staff were having lunch. I shall never forget the impression I got, of a glorious quadrangle of

grey cloisters, in the middle a formal garden with tiny beds, box-bordered, a fountain playing in the centre, and blue sky overhead. At the end of one cloister was the staff; doctors, sisters, nurses, orderlies, all in blue at lunch. . . . The sisters with large starched handkerchiefs on their heads, the orderlies all in blue gingham with blue mob-caps; awfully becoming. A splash of red poppies and white daisies in the jugs on the tables. It was a lovely scheme of grey, blue and red. Mrs Hacon introduced me to the Head, Dr Frances Ivens. She is splendid, and I became a humble admirer on the spot. . . .

Wednesday, 21st June.

The car came back from hospital to-day! We were so delighted. When we got back from the morning shift, there she was, sitting outside the hotel. Of course Betty took her for a little run, up and down and round about.

At 6 p.m. Mrs Hacon and Daisy Davidson arrived on their visit. They looked so nice in their grey uniform. They brought us armfuls of glorious wild flowers: pink valerians,

dog-daisies, meadow sweet, poppies. Our salon looks lovely with them, and we set aside the poppies and daisies to take to the canteen to-morrow. Then we all packed into the car, and Betty drove us. . . . We did feel happy! . . . It is a great change for the S.W.H. to come into a city and see people and go to cafés. . . .

Thursday, 22nd June.

. . . At 6 p.m. Betty set off to motor them both back to Royaumont. I felt it was rather an adventure for her, going so far and coming back alone, but I felt sure she would like to do it alone, so I stayed behind. I went across to the *charcuterie* and bought a very excellent cold pork chop, and had supper off it, with bread, wine and some of Mrs Hacon's fruit. It was rather nervous work as the evening went on, waiting for Betty, and I hoped she was all right. At ten minutes to ten I heard the horn and flew to the window, and there she was below in the Ford; I was glad to see her! She called up that she'd just stopped for a minute on her way to the

garage because she knew I'd be getting anxious. So I flew round after the car to the garage and we walked back together. She could hardly speak for excitement!

Royaumont had impressed her too, just as it did me, but the drive back had been the most wonderful of all, along the edge of the great forest, and there were gypsies encamped there. The guns were making a great noise, and Betty said she should never forget that drive. No wonder the guns impressed her. This was the preparation for the Battle of the Somme, which began eight days later.

2nd July.

This is a red letter day. It was gloriously fine, and Mr C. said we could take the car out to Royaumont with an easy conscience, as there is à lot of petrol due to us—thanks to the car having been laid up for so long. We started about 12, Betty in a clean muslin jumper, with a blue velvet ribbon; she looked so sweet, but dreadfully pale. We took for lunch some ham, bread, strawberries,

two *gateaux* and a bottle of red wine and Vichy mixed. We did feel so pleased with life. About three quarters of a mile from Rue Prudhomme we saw one of our big lorries crammed with the band which had been to play at a French hospital. We saw one vast grin, with familiar features behind. They'd run out of petrol. The sergeant in charge stepped out in front of us and we pulled up to hear what was the matter. Of course we offered to go back to the camp to get petrol for them ! It was a proud moment for us, as they all make fun of the Ford. We tore back to camp and waited outside the gates, sending a Tommy in for petrol. After about twenty minutes the petrol tins were brought out, and we drove back to the band.

It is almost a straight road, but so lovely, and such views ! Miles and miles you can see, with great sweeps of the Forest of Montmorençy. Bits of the road are awful, and we had to drive very slowly. . . . At last we came through Viarmes and pulled up at the back of the Abbey wall. We walked round to the main entrance . . . and found ambulances

there, and wounded being lifted out on stretchers. So the long-expected big convoy was arriving to-day! At first we thought we ought to go straight back to Paris; then we tried to efface ourselves in a corner of the hall, while someone went off to try and find Mrs Hacon for us. . . .

They knew nothing about this big arrival until 9 o'clock to-day! Then they got telephone messages for the ambulances to go at once to Creil (12 kilometres) to fetch wounded and to go on fetching them till every bed was full. They were putting beds all round the cloisters, and they would be slept in next night. We saw the wounded being brought, some on stretchers, lying so still—it was hard work not to burst into tears. One Moroccan, like a bronze statue, had a stick pushed into one empty boot and trouser leg. A few could walk one or two staggering steps, the orderlies helping them. Every now and then Dr Frances Ivens appeared, in her white clothes, a figure of strength and gentleness. I saw her lay a gentle hand on a bandaged head and arm, and she asked a question or

two, and then said what ward they should go into, and the orderlies took them away. One man wouldn't go to bed until he had told how he and his company had got into the 6th line of German trenches, just twelve hours before! . . . A *chauffeuse* of one of the ambulances came and got a hurried tea; she hadn't eaten since 8 a.m. Soon after tea we went, as we were on duty at our hut to-night. Mrs Hacon came with us in the Ford as far as Viarmes, to order more meat and bread for the 400 blessés. . . . It was such a divine evening. Our minds were very full of what we had seen. . . .

I forgot to say, even on this busy day, Miss Ivens found time to tell Betty how pleased she was about our bed in the S.W.H. . . . She said it had come just at the right time, and it should be used that night. I'm glad to think there is a *poilu* in it. It is in the Millicent Fawcett Ward. . . .

In July we were sent away to take long leave. We went to a lovely little *plage* on the coast of Brittany, in Finisterre.

Betty's father and brother joined us here, and we had the most lovely holiday all together. We made hosts of friends among the nice French families there: most of all with three charming young French ladies, who each had a dear little girl—Lydie, Mercédès, and Lynette. They were so pretty, so charmingly clad in jerseys and tiny linen knickers which their pretty mammas made for them as they sat on the sands. Their fathers came *en permission* at different times, while we were there.

"To-day we went down to the *plage* at 3. Betty bathed at about 4.30; she looked so pretty in her blue things. The Russian lady's husband is here *en permission*. . . . He talked a little to Betty as she came up from the sea, looking so sweet and with such a smile, her white teeth showing, and her face wet from the sea."

While we were on leave in August, our Y.M.C.A. chief wrote and offered us a "boss job" in what Betty called a "really thrilling place," much nearer the front line, because, as he said, "we had done our duty in hard circumstances," and I must confess that, left

to myself, I would have accepted the new offer. But Betty sat and meditated about it, on the sunny *plage*, and she said: "Well, I know it would be thrilling to go to Abbeville, but I vote we go back to St Denis. We know how grateful the men are, and they know us now so well, and I somehow feel it would be mean to leave them for a new place." So we decided to go back to our old hut. We were all very sad to leave this lovely place, where we had been so happy. We did not think then, that this was our last summer holiday all together. On Saturday 26th August, we said good-bye to all our kind French friends. We left many possessions in the care of the hotel proprietor, so certain were we that in 1917 the war would be over, and we would all come back again to this paradise. So there they still are: the tent, the chairs, the shrimping nets and fishing rods, and the enormous heavy and unnavigable raft, built by the Breton village carpenter, which would only hold one, and was generally attacked by four swimmers, and promptly submerged, to everyone's great joy.

In Paris we separated, Betty and I going back to our old rooms, and her father and brother crossing to England the following day. So we took up our work again at the canteen, and the journal says :—

" We were doggo when we got back. It is hard work, and no mistake, after such a long holiday ! "

I had a lovely hour sitting on a chair in the Luxembourg Gardens to-day where I could see the flowers and watch the children playing, and there was no noise of traffic at all. I did like it, and the birds came quite close to my feet to pick up crumbs ; they were wids, and one was just like Betty. I came away at 6, feeling refreshed by an hour of quiet and peace from Boulevard Magenta.

We went on with our old work until November, when our time was up. I feel I can only say, with the Victorian novelists, " Over this parting I must draw a veil."

The cold in late October and November was the worst I have ever known. We had, for a long time, no coal or wood in the hotel, and fires were out of the question, until at last

we managed to get some logs and light a fire in our tiny salon. We used to wrap our legs and feet up in spare coats when we were in our rooms, and occasionally go out and take a ride in a heated tram or on the Métro where there was always "a good fug on." The nights were frightfully cold, and everything in the room froze, that could freeze.

Before we left the men gave a farewell concert for us, and we said good-bye and came away.

We crossed from Havre to Southampton in a gale, and spent thirty-two hours in the Channel, of which perhaps the worst were twelve hours anchored outside Havre harbour in the storm.

CHAPTER IX

ÉTAPLES

From November 1916 to April 1917 Betty was at home, and the difference between life out in France and work at the camp, and life at home, is beyond my pen to describe. Everywhere we seemed to see all the old luxury and comfort, and "being waited on," which we had quite got out of the way of in France. It was odd to hear people complaining in shops because they had to carry parcels home.

Clean jugs, stair carpets, fires, and separate plates for two courses, seemed wonderful things to Betty and me for quite a long time. I thought perhaps Betty might decide to stay in England and find some work here. But, after a lovely time at home, and the happiest Christmas, she began to want to go back to France again and work for her beloved Tommies, this time as a motor driver.

There were many delays, as she was considerably younger than was required by the rules of the Y.M.C.A. for their drivers. However, finally, she was told she was to go to France to drive : perhaps the rule was relaxed on account of her 1916 record, a record of which her parents were very proud.

She and I went to London on 16th April, and she crossed on the 21st, Saturday. I came back the same day ; the house was very still without her, and I thought of her setting out on her Great Adventure, alone this time, and having to make her own decisions and decide for herself what to do and what not to do : no one but her own dear self to rely on. I was not afraid for her. I thought back a good deal to 1916, to many, many occasions when she had had to do this in very difficult circumstances, and I remembered she had never failed. Times when there was no one to help.

It can be imagined how anxiously her first letter was looked for.

22nd April 1917.

Darling Mother,—*J'y suis.* I hope you haven't been anxious, but I simply couldn't send a wag from Boulogne. I sent one from Folkestone. . . . We got on board at about 11.30, got two deck chairs, put on our lifebelts, and started at about 12. The boat was packed, and we had a heavenly crossing, and I didn't feel a bit ill. We were met at Boulogne by a nice Y.M.C.A. man and were taken to a hostel to have a meal. We went in a car that was packed with luggage, and Miss Mackenzie and I stood on the step, and went flying along the quay, much to everyone's amusement. After lunch I was motored out here, which is about nineteen miles away. We brought two relatives with us who had come to see wounded relatives, and dropped one at Violet Solly's hospital, and one at the hospital here. I don't like to mention names. Then I was motored on to headquarters and shown my billet. I am billeted in a house with a nice view over the river on the main road. I think I am the only female there,

but I'm not sure. There are some Y.M.C.A. men there, and an English officer downstairs. The house is kept by an old man and his wife —filthy dirty, but very amiable. My room is the dirtiest I have ever seen, but is a nice room all the same, and the dirt isn't the sort that matters. I left my valise and things in my room, and then I was conducted along to tea. We all mess together in a room, male and female combined. They are all ever so nice, and make you feel at ease. I've met Joyce Scott, and her digs are quite close to mine.

We have breakfast 8–9; lunch 1; tea 5–6; dinner 8–9; and we all float in when we want to. I came back to bed directly after dinner last night, and slept like a log in a very comfy bed. This morning I have reported to the A.P.M., and am now waiting for a driving permit. Joyce and I went to church this morning. At least it wasn't church; the Y.M.C.A. have a service in a little room, and it was rather nice. Afterwards I bought some chocolate, and a blue tie and a flash lamp. The streets are pitchy

dark, and I have to go up a windy stair to my room. I am going to stop now as Joyce and I are going in to Paris-Plage by train.

Ever so much love to everyone,

BETTY.

I feel I don't tell you much, but dear Mr Unknown, in the shape of the Censor, might object.

DIARY

Sunday, 22nd April 1917.

Joyce came and whistled below my window at 8.15 this morning, and I joined her in a few minutes, and we toddled along to breakfast. After breakfast we went round to the garage and I was introduced to the boss of the mechanics. Joyce has been put on to drive a big Garford lorry, and at 9 o'clock she went out to have another practice on it and I sat on a tyre behind. It's a great big lumbering old lorry, and on these awful roads one gets absolutely pitched about. We were out about an hour, and it was great sport.

There are lovely woods all round, with

little roads and avenues running right into them. At all these roads is a notice board up, either "Lewis Gun School," "Y.M.C.A. Hostel," "Les Iris," "Officers only; Out of bounds to all Troops," "No Road." It's all most tremendously interesting. When we came back we went and wrote letters, and after lunch we got leave to go to Paris-Plage. It was a ripping sunny day though rather cold, and we titivated ourselves up and prepared to enjoy life.

At 2.15 we sallied forth to the square opposite the town hall and waited for the tram. There was a huge crowd of officers, men, and nurses waiting for it. Presently a tram, or rather a light railway, with train carriages came along simply packed with officers. It was about a twenty minutes run and cost us 45 cents. each. At Paris-Plage we got out and made our way to the sea. It is a most divine place with a long promenade, acres of sand, then sand dunes, and no rocks. Presently we saw an aeroplane coming along, and we rushed along the sand to have a look at it, and everyone else did the same.

It came down so near us that we all had to fly for safety. The aviator was a nice little Frenchman, and he divested himself of his overall, or whatever the garment was called, and appeared in a most smart suit and a pair of brown boots. We watched for a bit and then we got back on to the promenade. A little way along we met Miss Bennett Burleigh, the war correspondent's daughter. She is here lecturing at all the different huts. She has been "twice through the German lines"—that is the title of her lecture. She went out to Belgium three days after the outbreak of war.

I haven't got a car to drive yet, because I have to have all sorts of permits and things first.

25th April 1917.

Darling Mother and Everybody,—I was so glad to get your letter last night and the enclosure.

I've unpacked my things and put out all my photos, and my room looks ever so nice. I am glad D.'s sister sent you his photo.

He is with the Gordon Highlanders and is in "a damp muddy place, some way behind the lines." His base is here by the way, so I may possibly see something of him. I wrote to Uncle Lionel[1] yesterday, I do hope you have good news of him.

There is so much I want to tell you that I'm nearly bursting with it, but the Censor would I'm sure not allow it to pass, so I'll have to wait till I get home. All I'll say is that it is simply teeming with interest, this place. I shall never be able to tell you all I've seen. I haven't been given my car yet, but I am expecting it any day. I expect I shall have a Ford.

The woods round Paris-Plage are lovely and are full of wild daffodils. I haven't picked any yet, but yesterday I went out and bought some here for my room. I asked someone the way to the flower shop, and they pointed to a filthy-looking pub, packed with Australians. I went in, and was conducted through several bars to a back room full of the most lovely plants and flowers. I blewed

[1] Brig.-General East, C.M.G., D.S.O., killed in action 6th Sept. 1918.

50 cents. on daffies. The water here isn't good, so I've bought some Perrier and Vichy. I had to go to a weird sort of cellar in a big warehouse to get it, and then carry the bottles home under my arm.

It is Anzac Day to-day, consequently there is an enormous excitement up at the big Anzac camp, and there are going to be great doings all the day. Sports and football matches galore. I am going up to see them at 1.30.

It is awfully cold. To-day there is no sun *du tout*. My saucepan and Tommy's cooker come in very useful, as I can get no hot water here at all. The water is frightfully hard and simply peels the skin off one's face. I've bought some water softener. I forgot to bring my shoe-cleaning outfit, but luckily Joyce Scott has lent me hers. They clean her shoes for her at her digs, but they don't at mine.

I live next to a cinema, and Joyce is over a carpenter's shop. At the other end of the town is another Y.M.C.A. hostel, where baths and other necessities can be got. It's a good

long walk, but is all right when you get there. It's quite a long walk to our mess too, which is probably very good for us. It's great fun at the mess. There are two long trestle tables, and we are a gay crew. One of the Y.M.C.A. youths is awfully funny, and we all call him Tich. He makes us die with laughter. Another is known as Charlie Chaplin. Breakfast ranges from 8-9. This morning I overslept myself and didn't get there till 9.15. I was greeted with shouts and spoon thumpings, and Tich called out that I'd got a car at last. I was so bucked and asked which one. He said "Stephenson's Rocket." Rounds of applause; I was sick! They are all so amusing and kind, and don't give themselves any airs.

Another of Tich's mots: "Honi soit qui mal de mer."

My room is on the main street and exciting things are happening all the time. Thousands of Australians have just marched past, and ambulances and lorries all the time.

This morning I dashed out of the door of my digs and nearly fell over six or seven

Australians who were sunning themselves on my doorstep. I've had some adventures which I will tell you in about four months!

Lots of love and hugs.

BETTY.

A. W. T. S.

CHAPTER X

ANZAC DAY

DIARY

Wednesday, 25th April 1917.

TO-DAY is Anzac Day, and there is great excitement among the enormous Australian and New Zealand camps.

The country all round here has been named by the troops, and as we got out we saw the painted board with Canada Park scrawled on it. We walked through a little bit of scrabbly sandy pine wood at the road side, and then we suddenly came to what we thought was a precipice. We walked to the edge and discovered that the ground all round sloped gradually down and widened out into an enormous flat expanse at the bottom, covered with short stubbly grass. But the grass was hardly visible because of the enormous crowd

of khaki. It was a splendid sight. The slopes all round, and Canada Park itself, were one solid mass of khaki, and in the middle what looked like a wee little clearing space—this was the football ground.

It was a lovely sunny day but horribly dusty. The sand got in my hair, eyes, nose, and everything.

30th April 1917.

Darling Mother,—I haven't yet got my car, because it is in dock, and the head mechanic is in Paris ill. However I have been going round with Joyce, who is driving a lorry, and learning my way about.

I am afraid all my letters will be very dull because I simply mayn't tell you anything! I am sorry, but I'll remember it for when I come home. Although I haven't begun driving yet I love the life, it is all so different. I shall have no table manners when I get back.

Directly after lunch Miss Burleigh and I went up to a place called Canada Park where the sports and football were going to be. We went up in a lorry. I shall never be

able to describe it all, but I shall never forget it. Canada Park is a big sort of plain with pine woods round, and is in a hollow like an enormous quarry. The place was packed, and we threaded our way through the biggest crowd of Anzacs, Australians and New Zealanders that I have ever seen. At one end was a Y.M.C.A. tent which had been put up for the day, and drinks and food were given free. Next door to Canada Park, in fact touching it, is the cemetery—acres and acres of little brown wooden crosses. They are burying at the rate of forty a day and the systematic digging is awful. Three times during the afternoon the Last Post was sounded over some grave, and I shall never forget the impression I got when each time all the games stopped, and all the thousands of men sitting on the slopes stood up in dead silence while the Last Post was sounded, and then sat down again and continued their ragging. It made the most enormous impression on me. During the afternoon a huge long Red Cross train passed. They come every day, hundreds of carriages, and crawling along at a snail's pace.

The event of the afternoon was the footer match between the Australians and New Zealanders. I have never seen anything like it. They half-killed each other! There were heaps of casualties, but after lying on the grass and having their clothes taken off they seemed to recover.

After that I had tea at one of the huts and then I went to a concert at an Australian hut, given by the men. At the end, the Colonel made a speech, and it really was moving. He thanked the troops, and then he talked about Anzac Day this year and Anzac Day two years ago. I can't put down all he said, but I nearly wept. You see they'd all been through it. He had a horrid cold, but he was a perfect dear, and so un-English. He treated the men absolutely as equals, and when a bugle sounded in the middle he turned round and said "Shut up!" The men nearly stampeded. They love him. He talked a lot about Anzac Day two years ago, and said if it hadn't been for the help of a certain British division they wouldn't be there now. After saying lots about the ——th,

he said he was proud to say that one of the ——th officers was in the room and he would ask him to come on to the platform. I thought the men would go mad when the silent-looking little ——th Colonel went on to the platform. The Australian Colonel took his arm and they just stood there while the men yelled and yelled. The men were moved right out of themselves, and I felt I oughtn't to be there. I was introduced to the Australian Colonel afterwards, and he was a dear, and asked me to come up whenever I liked. You can't think of the difference in that way here from St Denis. If my letters weren't censored I would let myself go and tell you heaps of things, interesting, thrilling and silly, from Ian Hay to Charles Garvice! I can't hold up my head another minute.

Good-night,—Your loving

BUNÇIE.

A. W. T. S.

CHAPTER XI

THE DAY'S WORK

13th May 1917.

My darling Mother,—I know this will arrive late, but ever so many happy returns. I wish I was at home to give you a hug. I have moved from my digs and am now living with Joyce and two others in a villa right in the middle of the pine woods. We have a woman to cook for us, and a bath-room, and it is perfectly heavenly. We have our meals there when we have time. I have been driving a relative about to and from hospital. Poor man, his son died just half an hour before I arrived to take him back to the hostel. This relative business is simply too pathetic for words. We have to drive them to the funerals. A whole string of men headed by the padre, and then a procession of coffins draped in a Union Jack, laid on a little

carriage and wheeled by two men; then the service round the grave and then the Last Post. A photo is always taken of the grave and given to the relative.

There was an air fight here yesterday, and a Taube brought down. A piece of our own Archie shell fell outside the Y.M.C.A. Hut, an enormous piece.

Thanks awfully for the woollies, etc. you sent out. I'm sorry I didn't answer sooner, but I simply haven't a spare moment. Could you send me out a pair of thick rubber gloves, size 7, ladies. My hands are getting in the most fearful state with messing about with the car.

The lamp blew up yesterday, and I turned round and saw the whole window in flames; I just had time to chuck on water and put it out. The curtains are burnt to bits.

I must go and work now, lots of love,

BUNÇIE.

A. W. T. S.

21st May 1917.

DARLING MOTHER,—I was so glad to get your ripping long letter. I'm not allowed to mention any names of places, but yesterday I was sent off to the place where I landed,[1] to take relatives to the boat. I'd just come from church, and was expecting a free day, and the prospect of an afternoon in Paris-Plage, when I was suddenly sent off. It was quite a nice run, and took me about two hours. I had lunch at the hostel with another driver, took the people to the boat, loaded up the car with tins of oil, and toddled back here. I then discovered I wasn't wanted till 5, so I went up to the Australian Hut and had tea. At 5 I went to a big camp about six miles away, where V. S—— is, to bring back some relatives. When I got back a fearful thunderstorm came on. The lightning was awful, and I got soaked to the skin. At 7 there were more relatives to take from the hospitals to the hostels, and we got in about 10.

We have our breakfast here at the villa

[1] Boulogne.

always, unless we are given an early run. Lunch we get where we happen to be, likewise tea. By that I don't mean we don't get a proper lunch. We always do, only we never know where we shall have it. Sometimes at a hut or a hostel or a hotel. We very seldom go without a sit-down lunch, and then I take something in the car with me. I have an awful appetite and eat pounds. Supper we have here at home whenever we get in, sometimes 8, sometimes 11. We bring a car back last thing at night. It is generally mine, and I collect the others at headquarters.

I do wish I could write and tell you everything, but I can't, and even if I was allowed to, I should never be able to describe it all. I do wish you could see it all. My diary is very spasmodic, as my only time is at night, and I'm too tired. I am as fit as it is possible to be in every way, but I am tired; I always sleep like a log, though. It is being out in the open air all day, and the excitement all the time which is tiring, but I do simply love the work. I was out the other night up in one of the camps, and I could see the flashes

of the guns the whole time, and hear them too. It was thrilling. It is 11 o'clock, and I've just had supper, and must go to bed. Good-night, darling.

BETTY. X X

T. L. I. W. Y.

DIARY

Wednesday, May 1917.

It is simply freezing this morning and I'm wearing all the clothes I can lay hands on.

We had the most awful business starting up the car. Joyce and I took it in turns, and cronked and cronked till we were nearly blue in the face. We got so tired, that in the end we gave it up, and I said I would go along to the end of the road and try and get hold of a soldier to come along and help. So I went along to the main road and waited. Presently I saw two dispatch riders coming along. I felt I simply couldn't stop a dispatch rider, but when they got closer I saw that one of them was a particular friend of mine. Some time ago I nearly ran over him at Camiers, and we have been firm friends

ever since. Accordingly I gave him a smile and a wave as he passed at about sixty miles an hour. However, he pulled up suddenly just beyond me and looked at his engine, so I tore after him and told him that we had been winding away at the Ford for hours, and that we were simply worn out and would he mind awfully coming to help. He is very good-looking, with a very brown rather thin face, and light curly hair, a lovely smile and two rows of very white teeth. He smiled and said "Surely," which reminded me of Geoffrey, and turned round his machine. The other rider turned round when he saw all this excitement and we all came back together. Miss Brodie was looking out of the window wondering whatever I was doing, so I told her, and we then trooped into the garage. I sat in the car and "worked the effect" while they ground her. It took some time, but in the end they did it, and then with many smiles and thanks and jokes they went off. Of course we arrived late at head-quarters, but luckily I wasn't put down for a 9.30 run. At 10 I took the husband of

the old lady I took yesterday, to join his wife. They couldn't get their permits together, as there was some muddle or other, and she came on alone. Their boy is in the Baltic Hospital in Paris-Plage.

He is an amusing old boy. He's in a ship-builder's yard, I think. He was very surprised when I told him where I came from. "Well," he said, "I thought yer moost 'ave coom from the south, yer don't talk broad at all."

On the road to Ignotus we passed thousands of New Zealanders resting by the roadside. He was very interested, and wanted to know all about them. They all cheered as we passed and they did look so hot and tired, poor dears. The men were wearing their tin helmets, and the officers the nice big cow-boy hats with the red and khaki band round. When we got to Ignotus, he said he wanted my name and address, so I gave it him and he said I should hear later. I do hope he's not going to tip me! He's only a workman, but after all I'm only a chauffeur. I am longing to know what's going to happen.

Then I went to the corner shop and bought

some chocolate. It is forbidden to sell chocolate on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, but the girl in the shop is rather a friend of mine, and always lets me have what I want, which is, as Jars would say, "s'nice but s'naughty." Then I went into the General Post Office and talked to them there. Mr Horne was sitting at his desk censoring all our letters, and he beckoned me and said he'd got my part for me and he handed me the book. The play is called "A Case for Eviction." It is for three people, and I am to be a saucy charming parlourmaid. (Loud cheers !) Then Lady Cooper arrived, and I took her and the two Miss G.s to the Walton. My special M.P. was this side of the tunnel, and he saluted and grinned and I did the same. Lady Cooper was very much amused, and said he seemed a great friend of mine, so I said he was. I stopped my engine once at a cross-roads where he was guarding, and he assisted me, so we are sworn friends and salute each other in the most military fashion. Whenever he sees me now he makes all the other traffic stop and waves me past. It's

screamingly funny. The other day he made two Rolls-Royce cars full of staff officers pull up, while I sailed past in my broken-down old Ford. One car full of staff officers looked furiously angry, and the other car load roared with laughter—so did I.

When I got back from the Walton I discovered there were no more runs written down for me, so I came along to my old room where I am writing all this.

CHAPTER XII

MUMPS, AND STORIES OF THE DAY'S WORK

Saturday, 26th May 1917.

My darling Mother,—Isn't it rotten luck? But I'm not really ill, and am feeling better to-day. On Wednesday I felt so bad that I reported at headquarters, and I was told to go and report myself to Colonel Raw at one of the hospitals; he couldn't tell me then if it was mumps or not, but he said he would come round next day, and so I finished my day's work feeling an absolute wreck, and then went straight home to bed.

There is a parrot outside my window which shrieks out long French phrases all day long. The only words I can hear with any clearness at all are "Cochon bon jour p'tite cocotte."

I blush as I write, but of course it is all much appreciated by Madame & Co. Anyhow it keeps me interested for the greater part

of the day. Madame comes in to talk a lot. Her gossips and scandals are too thrilling for words.

You will notice the style of this letter; that is because the Y.M.C.A. are not censoring it.

I must describe my effects. On the mantelpiece is a large vase of lilac and a large ditto of cornflowers. On the washstand a large vase of lilies, on the table by my bed twelve oranges, a pink box of chocolate creams, a big bag of enormous chocolates, eight books, two French magazines, some letters and one billet doooooo. On the bed more letters and a box of cherries. On the item of furniture at the other side of my bed a bottle of Eau de Cologne, and a wooden box of apricots, also some cigarettes, all of which, dear mama, have been presented to your little cheeild.

I'm too hot to write any more.—Your loving, though swollen,

BUNÇIE.

A hug to the Dumpos.
A. W. T. S.

May 1917.

My own Wuglet,—I am feeling a bit better to-day, so *voici une lettre.* The last three days I have been feeling an awful bit of chewed string. My neck and face still feel as though they might burst at any minute, but the dreadful aches have gone. The doctor hasn't missed a single day. He's given me a bottle of filthy medicine and taps my manly chest, and then he sits on the foot of my bed and cheers me up. Yesterday at 7 p.m. I'd given him up and at 7.30 I was waked up by a voice saying "Well, Betty, here I am at last." I was feeling beastly, so just groused at him. I'd got a temperature. . . . He didn't stay long, as a big convoy of wounded had just come in, and he only had time just to fly down and see me. He'd been doing operations all day, and he was worn out.

—— has sent me in a lovely lot of lilac, red and white peonies and snowballs. My room looks lovely. Everyone is awfully good to me. I think I may get some sick leave after this, wouldn't it be lovely? The weather

is simply freezing again, and I've gone back to pyjamas, a hot-water bottle, and two rugs. I've never known such changeable weather. Before I took ill, I used to have to do things that would have given me a bad chill at once at home, but which had no effect on me here. It shows how healthy I was. For instance, I have had to drive in the rain in a linen coat and get soaked to the skin, and stay soaked, and I haven't had the slightest cold. If I did it in Harrogate I should probably be in bed for a week.

I had a smash before I got mumps, but it wasn't serious. I was going round a corner, and a General's car came flying past. There was just enough room, really, but the driver lost his head and put on his brake suddenly, and the car skidded, and smashed poor little me flat against the wall. My wheel and mud guard were bent, and all his glass smashed. He was very apologetic, and so was I, and I managed to stagger back to the garage and in four hours was on the road again.

I had a most amusing time the other day. I was taking a lecturer and three other youths

out to a camp about five miles away. I was going gaily along the road quite near to the camp, when suddenly the car began to jib and splutter, and finally stopped dead. I hopped out and began to crawl about inside her and started winding her, but awful explosions took place, and then I began to swear. I tipped my car load out and made them work, but still nothing happened. Then out of nowhere appeared five young officers and offered to help, so we began again. By this time it was getting late, so the lecturer thought he would walk on. So off they all started lugging the magic lantern with them. Then I and the five lads set to work. They laid their sticks and caps and gloves on the bank, and we wound that beastly Ford till we were blue. Then a Y.M.C.A. car passed, and the driver said she would stop at our garage and send out a mechanic. However, in about another ten minutes we got the thing started. We all lay on the bank from exhaustion and then I dressed myself again, and then amid cheers and wavings of sticks I honked off down the road. I picked up the disconsolate party

of Y.M.C.A.s and tootled them to their camp, and managed to get back to the scene of the accident in time for the mechanic. Joyce had run him out in her car.

I am in a house where the New Zealand girls are, and they are dears. They aren't New Zealanders, but they work in the New Zealand Hut. There are four of them.

There are heaps of German prisoners here and they work on the line and on the road. The other day a gang of them were working under the windows of one of our messes, and a Y.M.C.A. flew up to the sitting-room and began playing the "Watch on the Rhine," and other ditties. The Germans got awfully excited, and in the end they all stopped working, and listened with sheepish smiles on their faces. Some of them are fine-looking specimens. They wear blue linen trousers, and white linen very loose jumpers, with P.G. and a number below. It ought to be P.I.G. I think. They wear such silly little caps perched on the top of their heads. I hope the Censor won't scrabble all this out. I don't see why he should. I have been sent

"Mr Britling," but the doctor says I'm not to read it till I'm well, and it's too serious. The soldiers must love him. He's a person you could trust to the last gasp.

It's quite time I got a letter from you. Do write.

I will try and give you an average day's programme, though of course I can't mention names. (I mean a work prog.)

7.30.—Marie brings hot water, and tries to wake us.

8.30.—Wake up. Discover the time and fly out of bed. We are supposed to be at headquarters at 9.30.

9.0.—Powder our noses frantically and collect our belongings for the whole day. Books, money, nose bags, safety pins, combs, etc. The big pockets of the overcoats are very useful.

9.-9.15.—Persuade the car to start. I always bring mine back at night, and bring Joyce with me.

9.30.—Arrive at headquarters. Fill up with petrol, and then go in and look at the

Somewhere in France.
"Betty and "Archie."

motor programme which is chitted up in the hall.

9.30-10.—Take a relative from headquarters to a hospital in P.-P. Nine miles altogether. Take some canteen workers to a hut up in the camp.

10.30.—Quarter of an hour free. Look at the car, oil and grease. Fly to the corner shop for a pennorth (chocolate).

10.45.—Drive Lady Cooper, Lady Superintendent, to another hut.

11.15.—If there don't happen to be any more relatives, I report to Stores. Take up stores of all sorts to the various huts in the camps here and also a good way away, nine or ten miles. This is rather nice work. I get fed at all the huts, and am bribed for particular stores in the most shamefaced way. One day my total haul was :—

1 bag large sweets.
1 tin peaches with tin opener.
1 box dates.
6 cakes.
1 khaki handkerchief.

1 pocket comb.
1 pocket glass.
3 packets biscuits.
Numerous invitations to tea ! !

2.0.—Got back rather late and found an important run to M—— waiting for me. No time for lunch, so on the way to M—— I stopped my car and ate the things that had been given me in the morning. I ate the peaches with my brooch, and wiped up the mess with the khaki hanky, and then powdered my neb with the aid of my pocket glass. I had a puncture on the way and had to change the wheel. In the middle of it I heard shooting just behind me. I fell over backwards and discovered a Lewis gun class going on behind some bushes—machine gun ditto on the other side—and bombing in the middle. I nearly died of fright. I wish I could tell you the name and all about the place I went to. You are not allowed inside. Everyone stared at me because they never see a girl driving. I bagged some

food from the Y.M.C.A. Hut, and ate it in the car coming back.

5.30.—Back at headquarters. Drive a concert party out to St Omer. Wait during concert and drive them on to N——. This is rather fun. I eat heartily in the hut leader's room—and then get the benefit of the concert. There are no women in these huts. They are nine or ten miles from here. After the concert at St Omer I drove them on to N—— for another concert.

8.30.—Drive them back to Paris-Plage, where they are staying.

9.0.—Take some relatives from the various hospitals back to the hostels.

9.45.—Pick up Joyce at headquarters and drive home. Feed—bed—sleep.

All my days are different, and I simply love it. I love the uncertainty. Last Sunday I did this.

9.15.—Arrive at headquarters. Nothing doing, and the prospect of a day off.

10-11.—Service.

11.15.—Going to P.-P. with a Y.M.C.A.

youth and Joyce for lunch and tea, and have a well-earned holiday. My boss was out, so I waited to report and see if all was correct.

11.25.—Enter boss in a great hurry and says there is an important run for Boulogne, and will I make preparations for a long run. I was awfully annoyed but rather excited. I filled up with oil and petrol—got some spare wheels and started off. I picked up two relatives at the Rest Hut and took them along to Boulogne. I got there about 1.30 and found the hostel after a good deal of bother and deposited the relatives. The boat didn't go till 2.30, so I went into the mess room where I found two Y.M.C.A. men and had lunch with them. Then I went round to the garage and filled up the back of my car with tins of oil, and then I took the two relatives down to the boat. It was awfully interesting ; all sorts of people going on leave and all in such spirits. I waited a little and then I came back here.

3.45.—Back at headquarters—free till 5.30 to walk up to the Australian Hut and have tea there.

5.30.—Off to Camiers (where Violet is) to bring back some relatives and take them to P.-P. where there is a hostel.

8.0.—Relatives from a hospital to headquarters.

8.30.—Fetch a woman from a hospital whose husband had just died. This driving of relatives is awfully sad. She was an officer's relative. I arrived at the hospital and went in and found that she was with the padre. I simply couldn't say I was in a hurry, so I told the nice sister I would wait. I sat in the car till 9. In fact I went to sleep for a few minutes, and she came at 9 and I drove her away.

When I say "hospital" I expect you imagine a big building, but they are only huge tents, sometimes a wooden hut. They are just planted along the roadside, like a huge town of tents and huts, each side of the road, and at the back is the railway and the ambulance sidings. The name of the

hospital is painted on a white board outside each set of marquees and huts. During the day the men all lie out on the roadside outside their tents, with Japanese umbrellas. There is the tent, and then a strip of grass or garden roped in, and then the road. They always wave their hands when I go past.

I must stop now. It's now 2 o'clock and I've been writing since 10.30 and am worn out.—Your loving

BUNÇIE.

T. L. I. W. Y.

Sunday.

DARLING,—I've just got your letter about D——, and feel so miserable about it, I don't know what to do. I do hope he's all right. How awful his people must feel about it. I'm glad Fred is all right.

The nice Colonel can't come to-day as he is going to another place. He's such a darling, and comes in every evening and sits with me and cheers me up. Yesterday I upset a jug of milk, and he hopped round and spooned it up. He's a Liverpool man

and ever so clever. He saved a Y.M.C.A. girl's life last year who'd got spotted fever; he sat up three nights with her. He'd just been doing a big operation on a boy who'd got shrapnel in his lungs and liver, before he came to me yesterday, and he said it was a nice change to come and scoop up milk.

The heat's fearful again to-day and I don't feel very grand. My neck's very sore, but by the time you get this I shall probably be all right. I shall be up in about a week, then three weeks' quarantine. I may get some leave, but am not sure. Wouldn't it be lovely ?

I can't write any more. I do feel bad about D——. Love.

BUNÇIE.

A. W. T. S.

CHAPTER XIII

MORE REMINISCENCES FROM MAISON MUMPS

3rd June 1917.

My own darling Mammy,—I've just got your letter, I was so glad of it. I am so sorry to hear about Alec M——. There'll be nobody left soon. I can't get the thought of D—— out of my mind. Thank the little Dump Wid ever so for his letter, and I'll write to him next.

E. C. G. really is "it," isn't he? I can't think how he does it. There's a large picture of him in the 23rd May *Tatler*, do get it, also a lot about him in Eve's letter in the same number. I suppose he'll now appear in the latest naval uniform. He's really rather great, isn't he? . . .

The doctor was very pleased with your letter, and is going to bring it to show me. He comes every other day now but he won't

let me get up yet. I've had the disease a fortnight now. I had it three or four days before I reported, really, and I've been in the house about ten days. I'm feeling heaps better to-day, though I'm wobbly on my legs still, and my face isn't quite normal yet; it still has the effect of having slipped somehow in the making—and I don't think it did really, did it ?

We had a great excitement here the other day, but I really daren't tell you what it was, because Patrick, the wild Irishman, who takes our letters for us would get into an awful row if my letter was censored. However I hopped out of bed and watched 'em, and they whistled past my window with the noise of a strong gas escape, mingled with a piece of linen being torn. I nearly died of thrills. The pickets were out making everyone go indoors.

I'm rather longing to get back to the villa. The drains in this place make one ill. I must describe our villa. Firstly it is called " Le Rêve d'Antoinette," it's on the way to P.-P. A little glade branches off from the road, and two little villas are sitting right at

the end of it, right in the woods. The other is called "La Flore des Bois" I'm not sure if there's an "e" at the end of Flore or not, but anyhow what does it mean? There is a little white railing round ours and a gate, and a patch of grass, and you go up a little flight of wooden steps at the side to get in. It is just like a Swiss chalet. Inside are just bare boards, beautifully clean. There are two rooms on the ground floor, a dining-room and a sitting-room opening out of it, and a kitchen. Upstairs are three bedrooms, and a bathroom. Joyce and I share a front room looking right into the woods—not civilised woods, but real wild woody woods with little fluffy green bushes and pine cones, and squirrels and piney smells. It's heavenly, and we spent our first night with our heads out of the window smelling all the nice night smells. We used to share a bed, which was rather awful, as only small single sheets were available. It was only the fact of our being so dog tired at night that enabled us to sleep at all. We never had any clothes on us when we woke up. Now we've got two little single beds,

which is tons better, though we only have enormous straw mattresses which prick, and no under-blankets. There is a Belgian refugee called Marie who cooks and cleans for us. She is a dear old thing, though she has lost everything and everyone. She never tells us much. There are two rooms over the garage, and she sleeps in one. The other two people who share the villa are Miss Hall and Miss Brodie.

The other day I was having an afternoon bath when I suddenly heard voices under the window. I was sitting on the edge of the bath and I looked up and saw, as I thought, the whole Y.M.C.A. staff under the window waving their hands to me. I gave a wild whoop and lay down flat on my back on the floor. I collected a few garments round my upper beam end and then knelt on the floor and looked out of the window. There were heaps of them all going for a picnic. I did envy them. They stayed and talked hours and I thought they'd never go, and then one very nice boy asked what on earth I was doing in that weird position. I flourished a

loofah at them and said that I was in the middle of a bath and would they please go? And they did with great hilarity and alacrity.

I'm longing to get back to my driving as I do have such an exciting time. In the huts a long way out there are no women workers, sometimes because there's no suitable living place, and sometimes because it's a zone where women aren't allowed. The other day I was driving a lecturer with a lantern and operator to one of these far distance huts, and I had orders to wait the lecture and drive 'em back. I came across a lot of W. Yorks men there.

I had an exciting time driving one concert party about. One night I had to go with my car to fetch them away from a concert they were giving at an officers' hut. It was fairly late, 10.15, and they had been told not to go to the officers' mess, because the drivers weren't to be kept waiting. The drivers have strict injunctions not to go to messes. At 10.45 I began to be rather sick of waiting, so Mr B—— who had come with the second car went off to hurry them up. He was gone

ages and I sat shivering on the step of my car. I was furious, but it was rather interesting all the same. It was a pitch dark night and the searchlights were going in the distance and kept on lighting up some soldier or other on sentry go. It was weird and quiet. The guns booming right away in the distance, a sentry challenging someone, and a sudden burst of applause from the hut on the other side of the camp, and funnily enough a nightingale going strong all the time. This particular place is a certain gun school for officers, and the little camp is dumped down in a sandy, hilly, eerie sort of place. On the ground at my feet was a pile of officers' kit—sacks, helmets, swords and odds and ends. I'd been using a tin helmet as a most convenient footstool. Presently I heard voices and saw two little lights coming towards me, and two orderlies came and collected up the things, and took them away by flashlight. They didn't see me, so I spoke to them before they quite walked over me. I talked to them a little and then they went away. There wasn't anything in it, but I shall never forget it. I

just caught sight of them once when a searchlight caught us, and we all had a good look at each other, and then it was all icy black again. When the searchlight came it lit up the camp and struck a sentry on a little hill on the horizon. The whole thing was like that picture in the tank film of the sentry at dawn. It was wonderful. When the orderlies had gone, two more men passed, and they stopped when they realised I was there, and talked. They were kilties and very nice, but it was only afterwards that it dawned on me that we had been whispering the whole time. One somehow whispered instinctively.

Mr B—— came back with the news that the concert party were in the mess and looked as though they meant to stay there. However in a few minutes we heard footsteps and presently a voice said "Er, where are the, er, drivers of the Y.M.C.A. cars?" So I said in a cold voice, "Well one of them's here and has had enough of it." I then discovered two officers. They came up to my car, in fact they nearly got in, and began cajoling and bribing me to go into the mess.

At first I was amused, though quite definite in my refusal. Then I began to get annoyed. They wouldn't go. In the end I was rude and they went. Still the concert party didn't arrive. Presently the two officers came back, one carrying a bottle of liqueur, and the other some dessert plates of chocolates. They begged me to have a liqueur but I wouldn't. In the middle of all this the concert party condescended to appear, and amid their tender farewells I managed to get a move on. It was now 11.30. I had to take them all the way back to their hotel in P.-P., and then go all the way back to Étaples and report. I left my car in the stores for the night, (this was before we went to the villa), and began to walk round to headquarters to report. On the steps of the mess, however (our mess), I saw two men. They came towards me, and at first I thought they were drunk *poilus*. However they turned out to be two nice English officers. They asked me if it would be possible for them to get beds at our mess. They thought it was a café. I directed them to an hotel where I thought they'd get beds

for the night. It was now midnight. I went into the mess and got some coats I'd left there, and then I walked down to headquarters *via* the *Place*. It was all very quiet and empty and dark, but in the big market square I saw two solitary figures standing, and I was sure it was my two poor officers. I walked on a bit and tried to make up my mind what to do. In the end I decided to risk it. So I walked back to them and flashed my torch right in their faces, and it was one of them, and a military policeman. They got an awful shock and I apologised and explained that I hadn't been quite sure if it was they or not. They hadn't found the hotel it seemed, and the other officer had gone off to have another hunt. They'd got all their kit slung over their shoulders and they were dead beat, so I said they'd better come along with me to headquarters and see what the Y.M.C.A. could do for them. So off we started. The poor dears had just come back from leave and were on their way up the line. I left them outside the headquarters and went in, and luckily found some men

there, who came out and sent them off to an officers' rest hut somewhere, and then they saw me home to my digs at 12.30. Some night!

Will you promise to tell me always when my letters are censored and exactly what part of them was scrabbled out. Don't forget. . . .

I simply can't write any more. I've used up about ten pencils, but there's heaps more to write about. I can't stop.

For continuation of this thrilling serial of such real life interest, see our next. . . .

Maison Mumps,
8.45 *pip emma*,
7th June 1917.

My own littlest Widlet,—I was so glad to get your letter to-day. As you say I think I can't have been getting all yours. I hope you've been getting all mine?

It was so stifling yesterday that I simply didn't know how to exist. I lay on the outside of my bed the whole day and gasped. There was simply no air to breathe. I felt ill with

the heat. It ended up with a terrific thunderstorm in the afternoon. I've never seen such rain. It cleared towards evening and the thunder growled away in the distance. It came on again during the night, and I've never seen such a storm in my life. It lasted hours, and the thunder simply crashed over the house. I thought we should all be smashed to bits. I've never imagined such a noise to be possible. It went on till about 1 ak emma. The lightning simply shot round the room. In pre-war days, I am sure, I should have been terrified—it was so stupendous, but last night my one feeling was one of safety—that nothing could drop on my head in the way of bombs or archies. All day to-day there has been gun firing—practising I think. It's gone on continuously till my head buzzes. The dear doctor has been in to-day. He came in dead beat. They've been taking in wounded all day—every bed's full, and he's been doing operations all day—till he says he feels full of ether. He took his coat off and I fed him with chocs. He was absolutely dead beat. They've got some very bad cases in just now. Several officers

who have gone mad from shell shock, and from the results of an awful new gas against which gas helmets are no good. Oh! how I loathe the Kaiser. I shouldn't think one single man has ever had, or ever will have, so much to account for as the Kaiser, when his time comes. The recording angel will have to take it all down in shorthand, and even then the heavenly editor will have his work cut out. . . .

It's 10 pip emma and I'm sleepy. More anon.

8th June 1917. 10 *ak emma.*

Good morning, darling.

I hope you've slept well as I have, thank you. Thank heavens it's not going to be so hot to-day. . . .

9th June.

I don't seem to be getting much forrader with this letter, but now for a final effort. It's boiling hot again and I can hardly exist. . . . Everyone is so kind to your little Bunçie.

I have been reading "Philip in Particular,"

by W. Douglas Newton. It's a little cheap war book, and you must get it to add to our collection. It has made me laugh out loud, and I do love a book like that. You'll see that I have cut out the bathing dress that has struck my fancy. I know all my letters are full of demands, but I hope you still love me in spite of it.

I had a most amusing time the other day before I "took ill." A man asked me to have tea with him in P.-P. one Sunday, so I said I would and bring Joyce with me. We said we'd meet him outside Skindles at 4.30. Joyce and I had a free day for a wonder, so we walked back to the chalet for lunch. We decided to go to P.-P. by tram directly after lunch and have our heads washed and do some shopping before we met him. Accordingly we cleaned ourselves and sallied forth in clean khaki overalls, and our black shiny hats with elastics under our chins, and a stick each, and feeling very smart and tidy. By the time we got to the *arrêt* it was about 3.30, and as there wasn't a tram for hours we decided to walk, and we did, and arrived

outside Skindles' tea shop, panting, at 4.45. . . . The trams run every half hour and there is usually one closed truck and two open ones —it's really more like a light railway. There's always such a rush that everyone runs after the tram and gets into it before it stops. It's the only way to get in at all. I am quite expert at it now. Accordingly, coming back, Joyce and I tore along in company with thousands of the B.E.F., jumped on to the footboard and clawed our way along to a seat. I was rather late, but three officers sat on each other's knees, so I got a square inch on which to sit. Three more tempys sat on the chain across the doorway and several more on the floor, while lots more stood all the way along the foot board. When we had calmed ourselves down a bit, I looked round and took notice generally. I found what most of me was sitting on was not the seat, as I had imagined, but the knee of an officer, the rest of him was hidden by a kilt which belonged to someone else, and a pair of bare knees which I made out belonged to someone else. My feet were resting on the skirt of someone else's tunic,

and I was firmly grasping, not my own stick, but a cane—the owner was somewhere under the seat. Joyce was nowhere to be seen, but I presently discovered her at the other end of the truck; I could only see a small portion of her, framed in trench boots and cowboy hat. We sorted ourselves out a bit and I smiled apologetically at the face I thought belonged to my knee, and it (the face) promptly asked me to tea! In this be-officered town, you've only got to breathe and someone promptly asks you to tea. I said napoo, and I was sorry, and that I couldn't, and had had tea, etc., but the face persisted—and so did I. The face felt it couldn't be eloquent enough in such a position, so with a great upheaval the whole of him appeared—like what's his name from the waves—the waves in this case being trousers, and to my surprise I found that the knee I was sitting on still stayed where it was, so the face hadn't belonged to it after all, and my apologetic smile had been bestowed on the wrong face. Awful consternation on the part of the modest and retiring young girl (me). The face, which

had now resolved itself into an Irish tempy of doubtful extraction, continued the argument about the tea, till I got quite fed with him. He said then would I come out with him one day during the week, so I said nope: I was working far too hard during the week to tea out with anyone. When the ticket boy came round there was the most awful upheaval, as everyone was sitting on their own or someone else's pocket. When we were re-sorted, the doubtful one was a little further away, though he still kept it up. The tram passes the end of our glade in the woods, and Joyce and I hopped off and went and lay in a tepid bath all the evening. I've wandered miles from the point, as per; when I began, I meant to tell you something quite different. . . .

To her old Governess

8th June 1917.

Darling Woodie,—I was so glad to get your lovely long letter this morning. At present I'm recovering from mumps! I'm having the most frightfully thrilling time here barring

mumps—but I'm not driving an ambulance, I'm driving an ordinary Y.M.C.A. car. Taking concert parties about, taking relatives of wounded to the different hospitals—I go into Boulogne and collect them from the boat —taking round stores to all the camps, and in fact driving anything and everything all day and half the night. I pass Roger's hospital a hundred times a day. It looks a ripping place from the outside. It's a big brown wooden place—most stylish—most of the hospitals here are just tents and marquees. I'm hoping to get a bit of leave after this, but I'm not quite sure about it yet. . . .

I used to be billeted in this town in a filthy old house by myself (except for numerous officers), but now four of us live in a little villa in the woods just a little way out, and a woman cooks and does for us. It's simply ripping. I share a room with a very nice girl. We have our breakfast there, and we have to get our other meals when and where we can. It's most exciting. Sometimes I feed in my car, sometimes by the roadside, sometimes at the mess, and generally at the

various huts in the camp. We get our supper whenever we get in at night—sometimes 8 p.m., sometimes 12 ditto. It's an exciting life, and you do see such thrilling things, which I can't tell you because of the Censor, dash him. The other day my lunch consisted of a tin of peaches which had been presented to me at one of the huts. I'd nothing to eat them with, so I had to scoop them out with my brooch and catch them on the point!

You hear the guns quite loudly here sometimes, and at nights up in the camps you can see the flashes in the sky. I'm so tired I can't write another *mot*. Good-bye, and thanks ever so much for the letters and photos, and write again soon.—Lots of love and a hug, BETTY G. STEVENSON.

CHAPTER XIV

AT WORK AGAIN

19th July 1917.

My darling Mother,—I am awfully interested to hear about the house-letting, but I do hope all my wids won't get bombed. If the house is let to Sept. I shall leave here on the 1st, all being well. I do hope that can be arranged because I do want awfully to be home for my (21st) birthday,[1] and if I leave here on the 2nd it's running it rather fine. . . .

I have decided to come back here after my leave. I do hope this meets with your approval, if it doesn't of course I won't. I don't know that I really *want* to come back, but I shall all the same. The work is so full of interest and thrill that I don't feel I could bear to leave it for good. I am going to squeeze as big a leave out of them as I can.

[1] September 3rd.

I am getting up at 5 a.m. these days. . . . I have an egg and a cup of coffee before I start, and then I generally come back for another breakfast at the villa or have one in Étaples. I wish you could see your lazy Bunçie getting up at 5 and going to bed at 10. I shall spend all my leave sleeping!

I happened to be at C—— the other day so I looked up Violet Solly; she was on night duty, and was sleeping, so a nurse took me along to her hut, and I sat on her bed and ate biscuits. She lives in a little hut like a hen house, with another girl. There are no windows, but the sides hinge up like nesting-boxes, and her bed is just beside this hinge at grasstop level from the ground. They are funny little things. . . . I went with Miss Brodie, by special invitation of the Colonel, to a dance. He is an old dear. We danced in a ripping recreation room to a divine band, and then we all sat out in a piece of garden with the entire C.I.B.D. looking on. We all had our uniforms on, and the canteen nurses looked too lovely for words in that delicious blue uniform and brass buttons. We had a

fine supper, but I couldn't stay very late because of my early morning start. I am going to some sports at the C.I.B.D. on Saturday, and, tell it not in Gath, I believe we're going to dance afterwards ; won't it be divine ?

I had the most agonizing time the night before last. I was miles away in the car with Mr Smith, our business manager, when I got a puncture. To my horror, my spare wheel didn't fit, and I had no tyre-repairing outfit. I decided to run on the rim to one of our huts in a camp quite near. We arrived there at 9, and Mr Smith went off to the mess to telephone to C—— to tell them to stop the next Y.M.C.A. car there, and we would walk out to it. While he was doing this I went into the Orderly Room and played dominoes with the orderlies ! Then at 9.30 we raked up a dinner of tea, bad meat-paste and bread, and then the hut leader came . . . and we all set off in the dark to walk to C——. We arrived there about 11 p.m. and to our joy discovered the lorry waiting for a concert party. We had to drop them at their various messes, and I didn't get in till 1. I left next

morning at 5 a.m. with another tyre, mended it and came back to breakfast. I was tired. I'm just going out. Good-bye, my own wuggy,—Your BUNÇIE.

T. L. I. W. Y.

P.S.—Mr Yapp has been here. When he discovered you were my mother, he said what a success the Buxton campaign had been, and that the Derby people were splendid fellows, and he wished you all success, and asked to be remembered to you when I wrote.

26th July 1917.

MY OWN DARLING DUMPOS,—The time here goes so quickly that I really can't keep pace with it. I do love being here. At the time of writing I am in a very jubilant frame of mind. I have just been on a long run to Abbeville where Uncle Lionel was. Started at 1.30 and got back at 6.30. Hard driving all the time. It was thrilling. I am driving a lovely Ford now, with a new electric lighting set on it, and I feel no end of a swank. We are having most fearful rain and thunderstorms

just now. I've never seen such rain. It comes down in bucketfuls. My mackintosh lets the water in. Yesterday I was soaked to the skin before I'd done any runs, just with getting the car started up. I was literally soaked to the skin, and it's not good enough spending the day in sopping clothes. Could you ask mother to get me a macky ? I want her to get me one called the Quorn, and I am trying to get hold of a picture of it for her. The rain here is extraordinary. In an hour the roads are nearly a foot deep in water and mud. There is a lot of sand in the camps, so you can imagine the state of things. We all wear gum boots, of course. We have now got two very nice girls living with us, called Miss Marriot and Miss Gray. They are such dears. I can't think why everyone is so nice. The whole base tries to look after us. You see we are the babies of the base, and they have told us that they are proud of us. . . .

. . . I have been getting up at 5 a.m. and going out to the sidings, and selling things to the men going up the line. Train

after train of them. It's the most interesting work I have ever done, but most horribly sad. I want to weep most of the time, but find myself making jokes and laughing with the men when I feel most dismal. I'm sure we cheer them up. I can't sell quickly enough. I get on the footboard of the train and they all fight for things. What with English, French, and Belgian money, it's most awfully difficult to keep one's head and remember the rate of money exchange. Last time I clung to the train till it was moving horribly quickly, and I flung myself off into the arms of an officer who was standing on the ground. There is a little shanty at the sidings which is open all night till 9 ak emma and the drinks are given free, and we sell the stuff in trays along the train. Magazines and papers are given free too. It gives you a rampant appetite for breakfast, I can tell you.

The guns are going hard all the time now. There must be a big strafe going on. At night from the camp you can see the flashes of the guns.

There are some big Étaples Administrative

District sports on next Sunday at the polo ground, which is near our villa, and Joyce and I have been asked to sell in the Y.M.C.A. Officers' and Sisters' tent, which will be rather fun. I sold flags at some Canadian sports the other day, and had a fine time. We had tea in the Canadian mess afterwards and enjoyed ourselves hugely. I've heaps more to tell you but I must get this off.

Au revoir à Sept. 1*st* and thank you awfy for the *cinque*, darling. TA BUNÇIE.

T. L. I. W. Y.

5th August 1917.

MY OWN DARLING MOTHER,—Do write and tell me everything that's happening. I hope awfully to be able to get home on leave on Sept. 1st, but it's quite possible I shan't be able to. There is a fearful amount of work just now, and we are driving all day and all night, and I've been having a very strenuous and exciting time. We meet the boat in Boulogne every day. Lately the boats have been getting in about 8 or 9 pip emma. We park our cars with all the military cars, and

then go to the quay and pick up all the relatives who happen to be on that boat, and drive them along the quay to the Y.M.C.A. hostel. There they are fed and sorted out. Some stay in Boulogne, others go to Étaples, others to Camiers, and others to Le Tréport—sixty miles away. Three of our cars generally meet the boat, and, needless to say, Joyce and I go as often as we can. It's a twenty mile run and very interesting. We arrived at Étaples the night before last, each with our respective loads, which contained twelve for Le Tréport. Of course they are taken straight through. No time is lost. Joyce and I and Mr M——, such a nice boy, were told off to do the run. We three tore round to the mess and grabbed some food and then tore round again and fitted up our cars for an all-night run. We all borrowed coats and rugs and then we got our relatives in, and at 10.15, with the whole base cheering, we set off in a convoy. As there were so many, a fourth car-load, driven by Miss Gray, who lives with us, was sent on before us. M—— led the way, then me, then Joyce. M——

is a brick. He had a commission and was badly wounded and got shell shock, and he has the most dreadful stammer and can hardly speak at all, though he sings beautifully. He is so brave and cheerful about it, that I have got not to notice it at all. When he gets absolutely stuck, he has to write what he wants. It's so pathetic. . . .

We had two breakdowns on the way, but we repaired them all right; then M—— got in the ditch, and we had to push him out. Then my light collapsed. It was awful. It was pitch, and I couldn't see a thing in front of me. Accordingly, once I took the wrong turning: I heard a frantic tooting behind me, realised my mistake, and turned round and charged up the right road by the cathedral at R. . . . Two inches in front of me I suddenly saw M—— swerving over a high kerbstone, in his frantic efforts to turn round, as he had discovered we weren't behind him. We settled ourselves eventually, and then his lights went wrong, and we only had Joyce's, which luckily were strong acetylene, to guide us. It really was the most

appalling run I've ever had. My eyes were simply starting out of my head, and when we arrived at the hospitals at 3.30 a.m. my nerves were really on end. We left the relatives there, and then drove down to the hostel, which is a lovely house in a divine garden. We had some bread and cheese, and then Joyce and I tumbled into one spare bed, and Miss Gray slept on chairs, and poor M—— had to go all the way back to the hospitals' hostel and sleep on a form. When the relatives came back they slept in our cars. There wasn't room for them anywhere else.

Next morning it poured for an hour before breakfast. We drove relatives from the hostel to the hospitals, without stopping. We then had breakfast, and we were literally soaked to the skin. The water squelched out of our clo'. Miss Gray had to go back *via* Abbeville, so she started about 9.30. We three filled up with homeward bound relatives, and left at 10 a.m. We arrived at Étaples at 2, had lunch, and dashed them on to Boulogne, the boat leaving at 4. Met the boat from Blighty arriving 7.30. Back

at Étaples at 9, and bed at 10.30. Worn out. We had a bit of rest the next day. I went to Le Tréport again the night before last. Left Étaples at 11 p.m. and arrived at Le Tréport at 4 a.m. Hard driving the whole time, in pouring rain, wind and mist. Three hours back to Étaples at 10, arriving 1.30, lunch, leave for Boulogne at 2. Missed the boat, so relatives had to stop night at Boulogne. Bed 11.30. To-day I've been given a whole day off. I'm half asleep. They are all dears, though. Joyce and I are getting swollen heads. We are far more popular than is good for us. . . .

The weather is dreadful; deluging rain, and one day hot and the next frost. I'm having to get no end of things, and knapsacks and washing things, and spare things for these night runs. We have to be always prepared. We never have time to come back here to get our things.

I have just washed my hair, and am having such a lovely lazy time.—Good-bye, my own darling. BUNÇIE.

T. L. I. W. Y.

19th August 1917.

My own precious Lamb,—What a lovely long letter. I hug you for it. I'm nearly bursting at the thought of Sept. 3rd. I am arranging so that I shall be back for it and I think things will be all right. However, we are very short of drivers. One has gone on leave, and Mr M—— has had to go back because his father has just died. Now Joyce's father is ill and may have to have an operation, so of course she wants to go home. We are going to see if she can go off on Thursday, and then I can come on Sept. 1st when one of the other drivers will be back. Mr Scott is being a brick about it, and is going to do his best, and I am all hopeful. I couldn't bear to have my 21st birthday anywhere but at home, especially when you've asked such a houseful of wuggies to be there. . . . Uncle Lionel is a perfect darling. He came to see me last Wednesday. He told me he would come if it was fine, so as it was pouring rain I didn't expect him. When I happened to go round to the garage during the morning and saw a gorgeous car draw up, and Uncle Lionel

step out, I nearly died of joy. He was a gorgeous vision in khaki and red tabs and gold lace and ribbons. He was a thorough wug. He had come down from the line early that morning, had breakfasted at G.H.Q. (where R. L. W. is). Mr Scott was a brick and gave me the morning and afternoon off, till 6 o'clock. I then introduced them to Joyce, and we all got into their car, and I drove them out to their villa. I was stopped by the sentries, and they got very hectic, but in the end let us pass. At the villa Uncle Lionel and I and "Light Railways" stopped, and Joyce drove the car back to H.Q. with the chauffeur, as she had a run. She got into hot water with the picket, who took her name and made all sorts of fuss, not being worried by the Presence of the General. By this time it was pouring cats and dogs, but, nothing daunted, we three took the car and went to P.-P. We then took the car and went to the St John's Hospital in Étaples. We had a sort of inspection, and Uncle Lionel and the C.O. walked in front, and "Light Railways" and I formed a sort of rearguard behind.

Then it was time for them to go. At H.Q. we met Joyce, so we all got into the car and went along the road a little way with them, and then we got out and walked back. It was a ripping day. We went straight away and told Mr Scott all about the trouble with the sentries, and he said he would protect us, and that it was all right. . . .

Yesterday morning I got up at 5 and went and helped at the sidings again from 6-10 minus breakfast. In the evening right out in the forest near B—— I had engine and lighting trouble, and had to come back at 10 pip emma with the car load of a cinema and two boys, one of them standing on the bonnet and holding up a little lamp. My oil all leaked out and I had to fill up with revolver oil from one of the camps. I arrived at 11.30 and as a result I've got a day off to-day. . . .

I am sorry to hear about A—— S——, I don't feel there will be anyone left soon. I've made such a lot of friends out here, but I'm almost afraid to, it's so awful when they have to go. . . . BUNÇIE.

T. L. I. W. Y.

From Brigadier-General East

19th August 1917.

. . . Here I am writing in Betty's sitting room. I came to this part of the world about some business, and have come on here.

I met her at the garage to which she drove her Ford, and she then insisted on driving my car, a Sunbeam, and stopped the engine five times before starting, and then stopped dead in front of a picket, and I expect I shall be court martialled, but of course it would be worth it.

I am writing at her writing-desk: it is about 2 feet by 1½ feet. At the right-hand top corner are two books, and envelopes, in the middle top a basket crammed with all sorts of things, soap, paper, string, etc. . . .

Betty returned at that moment, so of course I had to stop. She wants mosquito nets badly. I do not know if I can get any near here, but they are frightfully worried at night, as their house is in a wood. . . .

CHAPTER XV

COMING-OF-AGE LEAVE

Betty's twenty-first birthday was spent in Boulogne after all. She could not cross on Monday, 3rd Sept., the boat was crammed. Some of her kind friends tried to console her for her disappointment by giving her a birthday dinner in Boulogne.

General East wrote :—

4th Sept. 1917.

"I do hope that your poor Betty is getting over to-day all right. She will have told you about her birthday before you get this. I tried to make up to Betty for her disappointment. She was very plucky about it."

On Tuesday the 4th she and her escort crossed, and arrived in London to find an air raid beginning, through which they had

to walk from Victoria to Morley's Hotel, and there was not much sleep for Betty that night until the "All Clear" was sounded. Wednesday the 5th she arrived, along with the first batch of visitors for the twenty-first birthday party. She had slept in the train, but I don't think any of us in the least realised how very tired she was. She blew in at the door looking simply radiant, flung down her khaki bag, which had "Stevenson & Scott, Y.M.C.A. Étaples" painted on it, and which promptly burst open and disclosed every kind of contents, including paper money, and all she had had to "live in" for four days, and we all felt so happy to have her back, we could hardly bear it!

The birthday party lasted for three days, and was called "The Great Push" by one wag who helped at it. On Wednesday, twenty-four of us sat down to a festive dinner. Birthday speeches were made, and I do not think anyone present will forget Betty's happy smiling face, as she sat at the end of the long table, beside her father. Nor will some of us ever forget how she had to come down to her party,

wearing what was *not* the *dernier cri*: the pretty frock which was a birthday present, and was laid out ready for her in her room, did not quite 'fit' alas! So she had to appear in an old skirt, and a blouse she had made herself in 1916, and which was, as she said, a trifle *passée*. But it never spoiled her evening, though she simply loved pretty frocks, and there were so many there that night.

On Thursday the 6th, a big party went to the swimming baths, which we took for our own party. In the afternoon there was tennis, and in the evening we went to the theatre.

After the three days, the party broke up, and Betty settled down to make the most of her leave, and to rest. How she slept! But I don't think we ever realised how hard she had been working, and how disturbed her nights had been. Her leave simply *flew*, and she crossed back to France on Saturday, October 6th.

CHAPTER XVI

WINTER, 1917

Étaples, *Oct.* 1917.

We have a fire in the evening of fir-cones and wood, and we all sit and toast our toes and are very pleased with ourselves. We are all very busy and most of us are driving several cars. I'm driving two. The cold is awful already, with the most beastly soaking rain. It's lovely if you're only walking. I find it very hard to keep warm, even with all the warm clothes I've got. Drenching, pouring hail, and rain which soaks through everything till you haven't a dry rag. The other night coming from Le Tréport at about 3 a.m. before dawn I nearly cried with cold. I felt as tho' I had nothing on at all, and yet this is what I had on:

Leather coat.
British Warm.

Mackintosh.
2 Scarves.

I've always heard it's fearfully cold just before dawn. It was a wonderful drive. I got off from here at about 10 pip emma and arrived back here at 6 ak emma, 120 miles.

The two following letters are inserted here because they refer to one of these memorable drives:—

Y.M.C.A.,
A.P.O., S. 11., B.E.F.,
13th June 1918.

Dear Mrs Stevenson,—I don't know if you can bear to have letters from people who loved Betty, but I feel I must write one word. She just came right into my heart and stayed there and kept it warm through weeks and weeks of last winter when life seemed very black.

I don't think I've ever known anything to equal Betty's radiance and her delicious naughtiness.

All the time she drove she was a delight; turned up smiling for every run, and her way with the relatives was just a joy. One most memorable run I had with her when I was allowed to "chaperon" her to Tréport, and we came back without lights the same night. Her driving and her spirit were amazing, and I sang folk songs to keep us awake. "No one could sleep with that row going on," as Betty said, and then at 3 a.m. we tumbled into bed at the villa.

We shared the big room at the Dacquet for a month before she went on leave, and she was the sweetest companion. There are lovely pictures of her in my memory . . . and then lots of times when she got suddenly serious, and one felt "Tread softly, because you tread on my dreams."

It would be an absurdity to try and tell you what an emptiness there is there. Our hearts ache for you.

Please forgive me for writing such an inadequate letter. I did love her so.—Yours very sincerely, Lois Vidal.

On Active Service

B.E.F.,
A.P.O., S. 11, *Saturday.*

My dear Mr Stevenson,—We are very fed up here at present with rather a lot of night runs, and always to the same place . . . which I'm sure you have heard Bet mention. How we used to love going there at first; we thought it so fine to be allowed to go for a really long run, often at night, too, and Bet was such a ripping person to go with, so cheery, even though we did squabble violently at times as to which was the right way! I remember once we came to some forked roads; I swore we ought to take the right-hand one, Betty said it was the left-hand one. We ended in each going our own way, but as it happened the two roads joined together again a little further on, and we only just missed rushing into each other as we came down our different roads. . . .

Good-bye.—Yours very sincerely,

Joyce S. Scott.

Y.M.C.A.,
A.P.O., S. 11, B.E.F.,
France, *22nd Oct.* 1917.

Darling Dumpos,—You must all have wondered why on earth I haven't been writing, but we have all been head over ears in work, and I have been to Le Tréport three times this week, which has taken up the whole week. I am writing this at the hostel in Boulogne, where I have just brought in a car-load of relatives, and I have just missed the boat, which is bad luck. The N.Z. girls have taken a studio bungalow just behind us, and we are having a lovely giddy time there in our spare moments. They've got a ripping little garden, and have adorable dances in the studio. Yesterday afternoon we had the gramophone in the garden, and danced there on the grass. A man there danced divinely, although it was rather skiddy work on dampish grass. I was dragged away in the middle to come here. It was quite dark when I arrived, and my lights went wrong, and also my horn broke, and I nearly wept with rage and despair.

However, by dint of shoving a hairpin down the jet, I got the lights working, and arrived home at 9.30, after starting at 5.30, and it's only forty miles. . . .

We're having rather a nasty time at night now, with night birds, and in the day time as well, and it's rather nervy work driving about during a strafe or alarm with no lights, and I don't enjoy it. Our villa is quite close to the Anti-Aircraft Camp, and the other night we had an awful time, ——s flying past our windows, and flames, and explosions and goodness knows what. I suppose I shall get used to it. A thousand hugs to everyone. BUNÇIE.

T. L. I. W. Y.

From GENERAL EAST

3rd Nov. 1917.

. . . Directly I got in, I started off from Étaples, and saw your Betty. She was looking sweet, in her brown suiting, with the famous boots. In the evening we were dining at P.-P. and she had just said how nice it was to sit down to a good dinner, when a girl

came to say Betty had to drive relatives to Tréport, sixty miles away. The girl murmured something about the war, and I heard Bet say: "Hang the war!" but she was too sweet for words, poor child, though she had to go off with her relatives. I had meant to stay with her and Olive till about 2 a.m., but of course I had to clear out early.

60 Castle Street,
Liverpool, 15*th June* 1918.

My dear Sir,—. . . I happen to be the architect of the Liverpool Hospital at Étaples, and on more than one occasion your daughter gave me a lift into Boulogne. I remember coming back last November and telling my friends how one evening, it was Saturday, 3rd November (I have found it in my diary), your daughter had taken me in, and said she hoped she would have room in the car to take me back if I called at the H.Q., Y.M.C.A. about 7. I *did* call, and saw her, but she told me she was awfully sorry but she had parents to take to Le Tréport. It was an *awful* night, no light anywhere and tremendous rain; however,

it never *struck her* that there was the least difficulty. I remember asking her where she was going to sleep—she only smiled and said, "I really don't know, but I will be all right, thank you. . . ."—I am, yours sincerely,

T. E. Eccles.

A.P.O., S. 11,
B.E.F., *9th Nov.* 1917.

My own Darling,—I have got a slight touch of influenza, and am having a few days' rest in bed, and it is gorgeous. I am in Mrs Stewart-Moore's room at one of the messes in Étaples. I've got a fire in my room, flowers on my table, and roast chicken in my inside, and I am thoroughly happy. Col. Raw comes down to see me every day. I think I shall be up on Monday.

Uncle Lionel is coming down to-day. He goes to Blighty to-morrow, and Chappie is going on leave, so they are going together. Chappie is my name for Mrs S.-M., originating, I believe, from chaperone. He is spending the night here, and was giving us both a spree, but of course I can't go, so he will have to

spend half the evening, at least, here in my room. . . .

Chappie and I had a fine time at the villa. Last Sunday we were free all day, and we were mousing about in the kitchen cleaning up at about 3 pip emma, when a motor bicycle appeared, and presently one of Uncle Lionel's sweetest dispatch riders appeared with letters. We brought him in and found he'd eaten nothing since 8 ak.

He's such a nice D.R., and is perfectly at home anywhere. He sat down with his head among the washing, which was slung across the kitchen—the remains of Marie's rule—and tried hard not to notice my wincey knickers which were tickling his nose—while we fussed about getting a meal ready. We slung everything off the kitchen table, which is about an inch square, and produced a clean cloth. He and I ground coffee, and Chappie boiled the water. I ransacked the house and produced butter, bread, Libby's veal mould, cheese, and bully beef, and then with great *éclat* I produced three eggs and scrambled them for him. . . .

Uncle Lionel came down the other day and we had great fun. We had tea at the villa, and he and I sat on the kitchen floor while Chappie made the tea. I had to work after tea, but at 6 I was free, and we three went in Lionel's car to the Continental at P.-P., and had a lush dinner. We'd hardly finished when one of our girls appeared and said I was to go to Le Tréport as soon as poss. I was disappointed, as we were going to amuse ourselves at the villa until the early hours. The girl, Miss Vidal—a perfect dear—and I went back in Uncle Lionel's car—picked up my things for the night, and went on to headquarters, and then I set off with four relatives. I didn't get there till 1 ak. Uncle Lionel has brought us some lovely shells, and a General's crossed swords for a brooch.

Mr Scott and Dr Macaulay, the head of our padres, and a great friend of Uncle Willie's, come in and give me "spiritual advice."

I must stop now. A thousand loves.

BUNÇIE.

P.S.—At a town on the way to Le Tréport

about forty miles away, I came across one of our old St Denis [1] men—I can't remember his name. We were so pleased to see each other. He says the old camp is all changed, and hardly any of our boys are there. A good many of them are round here. He told me heaps of news; old Staples is in Africa, and young Staples up the line. Lodge is quite close to me. Capt. Grant has gone. . . . I was so thrilled, of course, I quite forgot to ask after Jim and Carr and Johnson.

A.P.O., S. 11,
B.E.F., 11*th Nov.* 1917.

Darling One,—I am up now, but am not to begin work again till next Saturday at least. Col. Raw said that I had been working too hard, and must go easy for a bit. People are dears, and bring cakes and come and give tea parties for me.

I am very thrilled because we are going to have a fixed half-day off per week. You don't know what a difference this will make. I shall do so much better work if I feel I can

[1] Where Betty and C.G.R.S. worked in 1916.

look forward to a definite free time. It's wearing to have to snatch minutes here and there. . . .

I've been reading a ripping book—"The Dust of the Road," by Marjorie Patterson. Col. Raw sent it me. He knows the writer. The book is about acting. Do get it and tell me what you think of it. It's fairly old, 1913, I think. I think it's very clever, but I feel the writer has funked it at the end. One feels it's unsatisfactory somehow. Anyhow get it. I've also been reading "Mr Sheringham and Others," Mrs A. Sidgwick. Of course it's lovely—short stories. . . .

There is a military policeman here who's such a dear (one among many). I keep in with them all, because it's a sound thing to do. In private life he's a stockbroker. . . . I smuggle him out buns and food, which he eats secretively, when no officers are looking.

You do get some shocks among the men. It's much more classy to be a private now. Take my word for it.

The other day I was out before breakfast to take two relatives to a funeral. Officer's

relatives. I've had to take thousands to funerals but I've never felt so miserable as I did at this one. It was a mother and such a pretty daughter. I'd been driving them up to the hospital for quite a long time. They thought the boy was getting better, and then he suddenly died. I could hardly bear that funeral, and how they bore it, I can't imagine. The cemetery is in a big sandy hollow in some pine woods, just off the road, and on the other side is a big hutment consisting of the mausoleum, the padre's rooms, and the orderlies' rooms. I sat in the car shivering, on the coldest morning I've ever known, with very few clothes on, as I'd dressed in such a hurry, and watched it.

First came a piper (they always pipe the officers to the cemetery), and you know what a piper makes one feel like. Then two buglers. Then a young padre with his white robes all blowing about in the wind, showing trench boots and little glimpses of khaki. Then the coffin covered by a Union Jack on a two-wheeled cart, like a stretcher, with two men in front and behind, wheeling it, and then

my two poor relatives and a Y.M.C.A. lady with them. They walk very slowly, and had to walk behind those pipes for at least ten minutes before they reached the grave. I couldn't see any more then. The cemetery is always full of soldiers, and they all stand at attention while the sad little procession passes, and all traffic is stopped until they have passed. While the service was being read, one of the orderlies came up and spoke to me. He saw how cold and miserable I was, and he deliberately set to work to cheer me up. I love him—such a nice Scotch boy with a burr. The first thing he said was: "The push must go on, you know." I told him how hungry I was (I had no brekker), and we set to work imagining the most wonderful meal, till we began to laugh, and I pointed out that it only made me feel hungrier in the end. He advised me to read something of Keats about fruit and food, I don't know what. Then he began discussing the various padres who took the services—how some always hurried and hustled: "no religion about it," and how others made one feel that they meant

each particular service that they read, sometimes forty a day. He cheered me up a lot, and then the Last Post went. Everyone stood to attention, the passers-by stopped, and the men who had been lying about jumped up. Then they all came back, and the padre bicycled away to breakfast with his robes rolled up under his arm.

I was numb with cold, and I didn't get my brekker till 11 a.m. On the way back we called at the hospital and got the boy's belongings—little notebooks and trumperies—a pathetic little bunch of things, which the mother couldn't hold tight enough. I shall never forget that Scotch boy; he was a true brick.

BUNÇIE.

T. L. I. W. Y.

Y.M.C.A.,
A.P.O., S. 11, B.E.F.,
FRANCE, 19*th Nov.* 1917.

DUMPOS DARLING,—I crave to call your attention to the fact that £— is due to me on 24th Nov. as per arrangement of £— per month, I having rejoined my unit on 6th Oct.

and the first £— having been paid on 27th Oct. Also I should like to humbly point out to you that £— is due to me on 1st Dec., and will be thankfully received on that date. Having got that off my chest, I will write you a respectable letter.

The top part has rather a Jewy look, I admit.

I am not driving yet, but I hope to begin again soon.

I had such a lovely time yesterday. Uncle Lionel came over from Blighty, and I got a lift to Boulogne in one of our cars, and met him. It was quite dark when the boat got in, and I was so afraid I'd miss him. No lights are allowed on the quay, only a flare, and I conceived the brilliant idea of standing right underneath the flare, and Uncle Lionel saw me before they were even moored. Uncle Lionel was O.C. the boat, and he came off the very first. My foot slipped, and I knocked every one down, and flung myself down the gangway into his arms. He said it was a very embarrassing exit for the O.C. of the ship. We all got into his car and went to

a café for tea, and Uncle Lionel bought me some chocs. We did it to waste time while the luggage was being got off. After tea we secured the luggage, and then had a gorgeous drive back here to Étaples. We went to H.Q. and picked up another girl, a crony of mine, and then we all squeezed into the car—Effie and I, one on each side of Uncle Lionel in the back, and B. in front. We went to a heavenly place called Cigale at P.-P., and had dinner in a private room with a balcony—especially the balcony! There is a new order here that everyone must be out of restaurants at 9 p.m., so unfortunately we had to be hoofed out after the meat. We had *hors d'œuvres*, soup, fried sole and pheasant, and there we had to stop. . . . After dinner we got into the car and drove to the other end of P.-P., and there we got out and sent the car back to the Cigale, and said we would walk back there. It really was most thrilling—pitch dark, with the lighthouse flashing behind us, and a long line of lighted-up little fishing boats right out at sea. We all held hands and stumbled along the dunes to the beach. We kept on falling

down. We were walking along quite gaily, when suddenly Effie disappeared with a shriek. We all rushed after her and suddenly felt ourselves sliding down a steep stone slope. We all arrived at the bottom . . . when suddenly a flashlight appeared above us. We sat up and took notice, and discovered that we had missed the steps down to the beach, and had come down a stone slanting sort of wall. The flashlight moved off after a bit. What they thought I can't imagine—a General and a Staff Officer and two Y.M.C.A. workers minus hats lying in a confused muddle at the bottom of a stone shute, howling and sobbing with laughter, and making frantic though feeble efforts to get up. . . . Uncle Lionel rushed about like a two-year-old. He can run most awfully fast. Eventually we discovered ourselves in the sea, so we bore off to our right and made for the Cigale. . . . We seemed to walk for hours, and every now and then we came across great channels of water, and Uncle Lionel carried Effie and me across as though we were babes. After many vicissitudes we arrived at

the Cigale, fell into the car, and went back to H.Q. . . .

We were all dropped at our various *maisons*, and this morning are feeling wan and weak, but strange to say are not all down with pneumonia. . . .

Truly there is a war.

23rd Nov. 1917.

I'm going to begin driving again on Monday. I've had a lovely rest.

This afternoon V. and I went into P.-P. and walked about on the beach. I do wish you'd been there. The aeroplanes came and hopped about over our heads, and the pilots waved to us, and we got so thrilled. . . .

My leave comes 6th February. I shall be homesick at Christmas. If you're thinking of sending anything out to a young girl in France, I know one who wants a wee leather valise, really small, like a small attaché case, for putting in things I may want for the day, when I'm in my car. A square leather one, like yours, with B. G. S. on the lid—Oh, very nice!

Y.M.C.A.
With the Australian
Imperial Force,
1st December 1917.

Darlings,—Don't you think this paper is rather succulent? I do. I've just realised it's December. How time simply does fly, and I do wish I was going to spend Christmas with my wuggies.

The money arrived safely, *et je vous remercie beaucoup*. I am not sending the khaki cardigan back after all, it's so jolly useful under my coat. . . .

I have moved from the villa, by Col. Raw's orders, and am now ensconced at the big mess in the Maison Dacquet, known as the Daccy. I have got an enormous low-ceilinged room, with a huge bed, two huge cupboards, a huge wash-stand, and a huge mantlepiece. As a result all my photographs and ornaments are on view, and they do look nice. Uncle Lionel has given me a lovely big shell case, and the maids here have polished it till you can see your face in it. It looks fine on my

table surrounded by my suède writing-case, my ribbon chocolate box, Jars' photo, my cigarette case, some cartridge souvenirs, and my Y.M.C.A. clock—*très chic*. All my other photographs are draped about the mantle-piece, and as they are never dusted, you can't say it gives anyone any extra trouble. I blow them periodically. We have at last secured a room at the top of H.Q. for a chauffeuses' rest room. It's going to be no end of a boon to us, and has been christened "The Jug and Bottle." One of our men has painted a notice for the door, a large jug and bottle with a chauffeur gazing at it, and a suitable inscription underneath. The walls are biscuit colour, and we've got lovely chintz curtains and cushions, and a divan. The divan is my idea, and I stole a camp bed and a mattress and a cushion from the store room, and it's going to be covered with chintz. We've placed it under a window under a gable in the attic, and we're going to have curtains across. We've got a good stove too. When it's all *fini*, we're going to give a grand tea and house-warming, and invite the whole

base. We're going to get a telephone fixed up from there down to the General Office. The only disadvantage is that it is at the top of two long flights of stairs. . . .

3rd Dec.

My car is off the road to-day, as there is a crack in the back axle.

I've indulged in a pair of puttees, and they're jolly nice and warm. There's a hard frost here to-day. It's frightfully cold, but lovely and sunny.

I think I've told you about Dr Macaulay. He's the director of religious work here, and is a great friend of Uncle Willie's. . . . While Mr Scott is away Dr Macaulay is taking his place. He is a Doctor of Divinity, and I always call him D.D. I told you about the little binges we have in a private room at the mess every Saturday evening. They are such fun. Last time but one he brought a nice R.T.O. nephew. We all change into nice frocks . . . and enjoy ourselves. This time we got very hilarious and cracked nuts in a hideous new way, which the nephew

taught us. You put a walnut on the table, keep it in place with the index finger of the left hand, and then smash the whole thing with your right fist. If you have enough courage to really smash, it doesn't hurt, but half measures are agonizing. After dinner we put on gum boots over our silk stockings, and overcoats, and sallied off to H.Q. to hunt for the mail. Our attire caused great excitement, and our coats were rent from us, and our clothes admired. Unfortunately the whole of the following week the D.D. was confined to bed with neuritis. . . .

To Our Noble Guide and Mentor,
Dr Macaulay, D.D.

Oh! Macaulay is a D.D.,
Of credit and renown.
He dwells among the Christians,
In a French and smelly town.

He probes the heart, and moulds the mind,
Of Christians young and old,
And firmly leads the straying soul
Who wanders from the fold.

With piercing look and eagle eye
He watches from his lair,
And petrifies the unemployed
With a cold and glassy stare.

. . . I had asked Canon Simpson to come, and forgot to tell him that the day had been changed till the last moment, and then of course he was nowhere to be found. He preaches the most gorgeous sermons—one about being spontaneous. How if you're spontaneous you're all right, even though you do things you shouldn't, sometimes. He said he'd hate to be remembered as Albert the Good! Of course half the base were scandalized, but we loved it, and when anybody wants us to do anything, they ask if we're feeling spontaneous. Another time he talked about the work, and said it was the Cause for which we were working, and some ideal inside us, that made the work fine. He said without this ideal it wouldn't be very illuminating to sell food behind a counter, or be held up on a wet night with motor trouble. Effie and Joyce fought for a week as to which of them he meant, as they had both been out

with him and had had engine trouble, and had been soaked to the skin, and been very peevish, as a matter of fact: not a bit the heroic inner light sort of stunt. He was awfully tickled when I told him.

I really must stop now.—*Mille embraces*,

TA BONÇE.

. . . On reading your letter over again, I'm struck with the feeling of what an extra nice "parr" I've got. I feel such a snipe when you're so wuggy about warm clothes, and have spent such a lot on me. I want to come and take your boots off, and pour you out some coffee, and ask for a threepenny bit, and say widdy-widdy, and all sorts of things I can't do. It's very distressing to have to love you from a distance.

CHAPTER XVII

CHRISTMAS TIME

To her old Nurse.

Y.M.C.A., A.P.O., S. 11,
B.E.F., 16*th Dec.* 1917.

Darling Nana,—I hope you will like this little present from Father Christmas, and I send you heaps of love and hugs with it. I wish I was going to be home for Christmas to see you all, but it can't be helped; I am a soldier now and can't do just as I like. I am so happy here. The people are all dears and I am afraid I'm being rather spoilt, but I don't think it will do me any harm. I can't remember if you saw me in my uniform, the khaki one. I'm going to have my photograph taken one of these days and I will send you one if they are good. I went to a dance at one of our Canadian huts the other night and it was such

fun, it was really given for the W.A.A.C.'s. There is a camp of them here and they do office work and cooking and all sorts of things; there are some jolly nice girls among them. Eighty of them had been invited to this dance and I went too. I had a lovely time and did some very stylish dancing with a nice Canadian sergeant. It was so funny to be dancing in a blouse and thick khaki skirt and out-door shoes, but I enjoyed it enormously; I think there is going to be another soon, and I hope I shall be able to go.

Au revoir now, and hug Kathleen and Winnie for me.—Your loving BETTY. x x x

17th Dec. 1917.

MY OWN DARLINGS,—I've been having flu' again—but I'm so happy—I'm being given a holiday from driving for a month or two, and am going to canteen. I can't thank them all enough for being such dears. They've re-arranged everything for me, instead of packing me off home as they might have done. I am going to work in Miss B's. hut with the Canadians. I really was worn out with the

car, and Col. Raw threatened to send me home. I begin work on Wednesday. I know if I went on driving I should never get really fit again, and my nerves are really on edge with the awful strain—cleaning a car on these cold mornings, and heaps of repairings.

I hope you'll like the little hanks I'm sending you for Xmas. I must fly.

Pounds of love, and I do love you so.

GORDON HUT,
27th Dec. 1917.

MY OWN MAMMY,—I hug you all for the parcel, and the lovely things inside. The case of course is too lovely for words, and is just what I wanted. Please note my new address and act accordin'. Darling, I'm so happy here. . . .

Y.M.C.A., GORDON HUT,
A.P.O., S. 11,
B.E.F., *2nd January* 1918.

MY DEAR MRS E——,—I was so pleased to get your nice long letter. Thank you so much for it, and for the lovely little cards.

I have been given a different job for a few months as you will see by my change of address. I am now canteening instead of motoring, and I am very glad of the rest and change, as I was really very tired. I am working in a Canadian hut and I am very fond of it—the men are so interesting and nice.

I have been having a few days away from the canteen with a cough and a cold, but am better now. I have such a nice room here—big and low ceilinged, with a big bed and three windows. It is in a house which has been taken over by the Y.M.C.A.—one of many with the usual courtyard and outbuildings. I and two other girls and some servants sleep here, and we have a mess of about fifty. We have built a big hut in the courtyard for our mess. The laundry for the whole base is done in one of the outbuildings. There is a sitting room for the ladies which is also a common room, and a smoke room for the men.

We have great fun here and the people are very jolly. One soon gets used to feeding in a big mess with fifty other people. There are over two hundred of us altogether in this

base. We who live here have a private sitting room which is also used by the chauffeurs. It is very useful, as when we come in from driving at odd times, we can always get something to eat. In fact we are very much spoilt I'm afraid!

We had a great time at Christmas here. The two big messes each had their separate dinner—turkey and plum pudding, and then we all joined forces afterwards at a big central club we've got, and had music and dancing. In our hut we all worked for all we were worth. We decorated with holly and mistletoe and evergreens, with big red tissue paper bows and red berries. It did look so jolly. For the evening we had a Christmas tree and Father Christmas. The men love it. The hut was packed and every man got a present from the tree, a bag of sweets or tobacco, and a Christmas card. All the food and drinks were free. Then we had a band and concert and dance for them. Our hut is only one of about thirty, and they all gave some sort of entertainment, and the food was free. We had a great time, though we were

all dog tired after it. But it was well worth it.

Thank you again so much for your kind letter and wishes. You say you feel proud to hear from us out here, but we are also proud to hear from those at home. Barring the soldiers, yours is much the harder job, that of "carrying on." We out here have most of the excitement and interest, and I admire the people who stick to their jobs in Blighty immensely. We all feel out here the real people at home are doing better work, very often unnoticed, than a great many people out here in the limelight. I must really stop now as it is nearly dinner time. Please give Grimmy a pat for me next time you see him, and tell him to be a good dog.—Yours very sincerely, BETTY G. STEVENSON.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BRIDGE

To her Father

6th Jan. 1918.

I AM going back to my car when I'm fit again, and am coming home in the beginning of February. I shall either ask for indefinite leave, or hand in my permit for a month or two, I'm not quite sure when. I've never really got rid of that silly chill I got, so everyone advises me to have a good big leave, and get braced up for the Summer, so I think I shall. . . .

I'm writing such drivel, but my pen seems to be running away with me, but I don't really feel like it a bit. I feel "mentally unsettled"—what a hideous combination of words, but I can't think of a better. I suppose it's the war really—one feels one is floating about without an anchor—sounding feverishly

for something definite to anchor to. "Unsettled" is really the only word I can think of. There is so much here that I see which stamps itself on my mind, and I have to think about it, and can come to no happy or definite conclusion. I long to put all of it down in writing. If only I could!

That's at the root of it. There's such a lot inside me which longs to come out in music or writing, and I can hardly bear it when I realise I can't get rid of it anyhow. Perhaps it will get so bad sometime, that I shall be able to write it away, I only hope so. Everything here seems to mean something to me, to be in inverted commas so to speak, and the most ordinary things seem to excite me in a way which I can't explain, like happiness and sadness mixed. I suppose I've got very fond of everything, and yet I often feel homesick. I find myself looking forward absurdly to driving again, and to seeing the things I know—the quayside with all the fishing boats sailing in, and the women clumping across the road, with baskets, to meet them, and take the fish to the market, and yet when

they really do these things I get very annoyed, because they get in the way of the car! This is a funny sort of letter, and I don't know whether I shall ever post it. I've got what I call a "spasm"; when there's so much I want to write that I can't sort out my ideas, and I can't find words for the impressions I want to give. I think everything here is so elemental —it's like living in a dramatic situation the whole time, and you can't get away from it.

I'm awfully fond of the river here. There is a bridge over it from which you can get the most wonderful view of everything. On one side the river mouth and the sea and the little fishing boats; the quay and the big sailors' crucifix, where the women pray when there is a storm at sea. The boats anchor quite near, and they look like something hazy and unreal, sitting on a shiny wet river, with every sail and mast and man reflected in the water. I long to put my hand down and stroke them. Behind them are the houses—filthy and ramshackle, but gorgeously picturesque seen from my bridge, with the sun warming their pink, white, and grey roofs.

Behind the houses again is the camp—the tents crawling up the hill like white snails, and more hills and pine trees behind them. The whole thing is so illogical, boats and fishermen on the one hand, and on the other tents and soldiers and bugle calls. That's one of the fascinations of my bridge—the one side is peace, and the other war. I should love to be able to paint a picture of it—the boats, and the sea, and the heavenly lights in the water. The other side a railway bridge stretching across the river and a train creeping slowly over it. In the distance it looks absurdly unreal and toylike. The train is long, and on the trucks are guns, ammunition waggons and lorries, and men are leaning out of the windows, sitting on the roofs and steps, and crowding round the open doors of goods and horse vans. The little toy train is on the direct line to Amiens. Flat, swampy fields and ditches spread round the river, then come the hills and pine woods and the road to P.-P. I stood on the bridge the other morning and saw all this and I wanted badly to shout or scream - do some-

thing stupid. And then some aeroplanes flew over, and soldiers and ambulances and lorries and trams and bicycles came over the bridge, and it all seemed so futile. I came back feeling I'd over-eaten myself on plain bread and butter and the very richest chocolates, two things totally unlike. Ever since I've been here I've got unhappy over unnecessary things—the gorgeous sunsets behind the hills and at sea. The huge red ball sinks lower and lower, and I try frantically to catch some idea in my mind which I can get hold of, and then the impatient sun dips into the sea, and I'm left feeling silly and small, and wondering what It was I was trying so hard to catch hold of. . . .

I'm horrified at the amount and " quality " of what I have written. I feel better, though. I'm not a bit depressed as all these ravings might seem to indicate, but sometimes the things I see hurt me so that I nearly rave with the desire to put them all down on paper. To create something out of the colossal amount of material there is waiting to be used. Perhaps I shall be able to some day.

Cutty, darling, I hug you. Don't think I've gone off my head. I've just had a spasm, and I had to write it all. I've done it before and torn it up, but this time I have put it in a letter.

Je t'embrasse de tout mon cœur.

Ta Bonçe.

A. W. T. S.

CHAPTER XIX

FLYING FOX

A.P.O., S. 11,
B.E.F., 10*th Jan.* 1918.

MOTHER DARLING,—Just a line to say good-night. I am beginning work again on Monday and am very glad. It's insupportable having nothing to do. . . .

I have been scribbling such a lot—a sort of diary, and I am enjoying it. I won't send any of it home because places are mentioned, and the bulk of it would attract and annoy the Censor.

Have you read " Tommies Two " by Blanche Wills Chandler ? I must send it to you, Dumpos—it's lovely, and I didn't send you a Christmas present because I couldn't think of anything you would like, and it seemed a pity to spend money on a useless nothing. I therefore sent you nothing chock full of

love. I'm reading Locke's "Wonderful Year"—it's simply alive. The pages are covered with little bits of human existence, and thoughts and doings, and *not* merely printed words. I think Locke is a genius, and he does so remind me of R.L.S. If Locke rode a donkey through the Cevennes, he would write about it in just the same way—don't you think so?

I must stop now.—Good night darlings.

BETTY.

T. L. I. W. Y.

Y.M.C.A., GORDON HUT,
A.P.O., S. 11,
B.E.F., 13*th Jan.* 1918.

DARLING MOTHER,—. . . I have just been up to the military church in the camp for the evening service, with Joyce and another girl. It was nice, and there was a packed congregation of officers and men, and sisters in their white caps and overcoats, and W.A.A.C.s — so interesting, and we all bellowed hymns and then walked back with lanterns.

This afternoon we three went for a walk in the woods. We climbed up and up, and came to a steep ladder and scrambled up to the top (in a high wind)! The view was divine. The whole of P.-P. and Étaples laid out below is in the bright sunshine . . . the white houses, and the blue sea and the two lighthouses.

I begin work again at the hut to-morrow, and I'm looking forward to it. It's horrid doing nothing. This is a rather disconnected sort of letter, but I'm very sleepy, and very full of food—oxo, ham and beans, and sponge pudding, so please excuse it. I am so sorry for all you wids at home with nothing to eat. I'm sure we've got more here. However, they've begun to be stricter now, and I think it's about time. Now we're rationed, and on rations too. We draw from the Army: bully beef, jam, cheese, margarine, pickles, tea, sugar, flour, bread and biscuits, dried fruits, and dried vegetables, meat and potatoes. In our mess, we've been having eggs and bacon every morning, now we only have eggs twice a week, but we have porridge

to make up. We have condensed milk as a rule, but are allowed a very little *bon lait.* Eggs are 40c. each here—how much are they at home? In the town cakes are not allowed to be eaten in *cafés*, but they can be sold in shops, except on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and the same rule applies to chocolate. But still the cakes are lovely, iced and with sugar—but it's getting more difficult now. No milk is procurable in *cafés* after 9 ak emma; you have to put up with lemons! In some of the places they use liquid sugar—horrid sticky stuff. But still we get far more to eat than you. I think the civilians find it hard, and they have riots and queues for bread. It's not safe to go about alone carrying bread.

Didn't I ever thank you for your photo? It's lovely, and I've bought such a nice little frame for it. I'm going to have mine taken one day—and I'll send it on. . . . Good-night, my own mammy.—Your loving daughter, who hugs you tight in spirit. BETTY.

T. L. I. W. Y.

Y.M.C.A.,
A.P.O., S. 11, B.E.F.,
1st February 1918.

Darling Dumpos,—Thanks muchly for the money order which I duly received, etc. . . .

My leave is due on the 6th, but I can't take it just at once.

It is a long time since I've written to my wids, but such a lot has been happening, which I will now proceed to explain.

I am going to transfer, and be a hut worker for the summer. I can't tell you how pleased I am. Driving has got so on my nerves, I don't feel I ever want to do it again, at least not for some time. Mr Scott has been very decent about it, and is going to try and get me permanently into the Gordon Hut, which is, of course, what I am longing for. In the meantime, I am driving for three weeks, as another of our drivers has been sent to another base for so long. It's an open Ford van, and I'm so cold, I don't know what to do—I wish I'd got that fleece lining.[1]

[1] This was stolen in the post.

Everything is frozen, and my face is all peeling and raw with the wind. I'm a very miserable Starkey, and I've got another cold. Thank goodness it's only for three weeks—I don't honestly think I could stick it any longer. I'm horribly homesick for the Gordon.

I borrowed an Australian's horse the other day, and had a gallop in the camp, to the intense excitement of everyone. I was so stiff the next day, I walked like a bilious drake.

In our hut there is a man who used to be head chef at the Prospect; we jawed quite a lot. There is another dear old man who comes in, and he always brings us food—maple sugar and Canadian sweets.

I have made great friends with another girl who works in the Gordon, called Avice Rhodes. She is such a dear, and we are called "the heavenly twins." Unofficially, we know that the orderlies in the kitchen call us Chubbie and Tweenie, and Budge and Toddy, behind our backs. Officially, of course, we know nothing.—*Beaucoup* love.

BET.

From General East

8th Feb. 1918.

. . . One of my Staff officers, when on leave on the 6th, saw Betty at Étaples. She was driving her Archibald again for three weeks, and did not expect to get home for two or three weeks from then, which would mean the end of this month, or the beginning of next.

She was very well, but is longing to get back. She wants to get properly "introduced" into the hut, I think. Do not worry about the child. I get news of her fairly often, and I hope to be able to see her off when she goes. . . .

Y.M.C.A.,
A.P.O., S. 11, B.E.F.,
10*th February* 1918.

Darling One,—I was glad to get your two letters, and you mustn't be cross with it, because it won't have it, and it loves you *beaucoup*, and won't ever go so long again without writing. Selah.

The question of my leave was so vague and uncertain, that I purposely didn't write about it until something was definitely settled. I have now decided to leave on Thursday, 21st February, and I shall stay a night in London, and come north on Friday. Don't you worry about your Y.M.C.A. campaign, poppet beloved, because I shall get five or six weeks' leave, hurrah! Isn't it joyful?

I am afraid I'm not getting back to the Gordon, but Mr Scott is being exceptionally nice about everything, and is going to get me into a nice hut—I hope with the Canadians. I am so looking forward to it for the next few months.

I am having a perfectly heavenly time at present. Archie, my blighted Ford van, is off the road for repairs, and I am driving a horse and cart round the camp with stores! It's too thrilling for words. It's one of the Y.M.C.A.'s horses and carts, and I saw it standing outside H.Q. two days ago, and I leapt in and went off for a joy-ride. I apologised when I came back, and was greeted with smiles and cheers, and finally it was agreed

that I should take over the horse till I go on leave, and there I be. I am having a *succès fou*. The cart is two-wheeled, and the market type, with painted green woodwork, enormous long straight shafts, and huge red and green wooden wheels. There is a bench with a back, sliding across the middle of the cart, and nothing between driver and horse. The latter goes by the name of Flying Fox, because it can't fly. It isn't a bad horse, and is an old artillery animal. It shies at trains, and has a habit of backing in narrow streets, and I love it. I have successfully waked up all the traffic and M.P.'s for miles. . . .

Au revoir, mon p'tit chou.—Je t'aime plus que la vie. BET.

The following letters, about Flying Fox, are inserted here, though they were written to us at a later date:—

DEVIZES, WILTS,
Sun., 23rd June 1918.

DEAR MRS STEVENSON,—Her photo came this morning, and you know how glad I am to have it, and shall value it always. She always

looked so happy, didn't she, and I am almost glad now not to be returning for a few months, as we always told each other all the funny little things which happened at the counter—and away from it too.

Someone wrote to me from Étaples the other day calling her the "brightest and happiest of all the workers," and the two New Zealand girls wrote also saying they had just taken her some flowers.

I expect she told you on her last leave how she drove the Stores cart and horse for about three weeks. I used to go with her whenever I could get off. We used to laugh so over it, and Betty never knew how pretty she looked sitting up in the funny old French cart with stores piled up behind.

I am here doing a temporary motor job, and can't help always remembering her coping with "Archie," the Ford, and of how once she and I charged a fence in him, to the fury of the pickets near by, and how she shouted with laughter, and they had to laugh too in the end.
—Yours affectionately, AVICE RHODES.

IPSWICH, *1st August* 1918.

DEAR MRS STEVENSON,— . . . One of the things I loved best about Betty was her glorying love of her home and her family. It was lovely to hear her talk about you, and her huge thrill of excitement whenever letters came, or when she had a " spasm " and wrote reams to you.

One of the last delightful things I did with her before she went on leave was driving round with her and Flying Fox, when she sat up so brave and buoyant on that little trap, and carted stores around, bursting with delight and amusement at herself, and chuckling whenever she passed a policeman she knew, who was accustomed to seeing her only on a car !

This is not half the letter I meant it to be, but forgive me. I know so dreadfully well how the sun goes out of life, but her gallant memory will always keep you brave.—Yours,

LOIS VIDAL.

DIARY

MAISON DACQUET,
ÉTAPLES, *9th February* 1918.

I've had a most amusing day, and am feeling cheery and pleased with life in general. I have also got that most pleasurable feeling of having been a small success. Archibald's magneto developed serious internal trouble last night, and I was only just able to crawl down from the Con. Camp with her, and land in the garage with a grunt and a honk. As a result she is off the road to-day and being doctored—I had therefore nothing to do. . . .

We wandered along the road to H.Q., and saw standing in front of the gate the horse and cart from the Stores. Then I didn't feel bored any longer. I seized Effie by the hand and we raced along towards it. As we got to the gate Connon came out: I leapt into the cart, seized the reins, dragged in Effie and then Connon, and off we went.

Jock, the little traffic man at the corner of the Rue de Rivage, nearly jumped out of his skin when he saw us. I couldn't get used to

having no horn, and nothing to make a noise with, so at the last minute I opened my mouth and yelled, and the others squealed, and Fox backed into the kerb, so no wonder poor Jock lost his nerve for a moment. He soon recovered, and then started cheering and waving his arms, which of course, muddled the other traffic considerably. We left him disentangling himself from a maze of cars and lorries. I then drove Connon to the post office where she had some cheques to see to. While she was inside, a company of Belgian artillery came past, this was too much for Fox: she turned completely round, and then began to back till I thought she would never stop, all over the road and the kerb (much to the delight of the Belgian Army), and Effie and I clinging like limpets to our seats. At last Connon came out and held Fox till all the cavalcade had passed. We then did a little tour of the town, and then took Fox back to the Stores where she lives. Altogether we had a successful tour.

Just before lunch I met Mr Smith and asked if he had minded. He was awfully nice.

and said he didn't mind a bit. I then asked if I could have her out again, and he said yes. It was finally arranged that I should take over the driving of Fox for the Stores till I went on leave in about a fortnight's time, and that as soon as Archie was on the road again, Effie should take it over. I went away frightfully pleased with myself, and told all my M.P.'s and traffic men to be prepared. Accordingly at 2 pip emma I reported at Stores and discovered that I was to take Mr Smith out to Les Iris and Ignotus with stores. Les Iris is a hostel for officers' relatives who come out to visit their wounded people. It is a beautiful house in lovely grounds (at Le Touquet, about four miles from Étaples). It belonged to a rich American in peace time, and we have taken it for the duration. It is a gorgeous place. We drove out there in great style, and caused a great sensation, and thoroughly enjoyed it. It was a heavenly day, bright sunshine, a bit of wind, and quite a nip in the air. The whole camp was trooping out to Paris-Plage to disport itself—officers, Tommies, Waacs, nurses, and drivers. French,

English, Scotch, Canadian, American, Belgian, Chinese, Portuguese, and Indian, in every sort of vehicle. The tram bulged with people, the men were sitting on the steps and on each other's knees, and standing on the coupling joints of the cars. A stream of little *fiacres* jogged along with a nice selection of officers and nurses inside, bicycles by the score, cars, and lorries giving lifts to Waacs, and two gorgeous French officers in the one and only hired car that Étaples possesses, the G.O.C. in his mighty Vauxhall with its red flag, and the A.P.M. on horseback—and Miss Stevenson and Mr Smith, plus sacks of sugar and raw meat in muslin bags, and cheese and margarine, and tea and pickles and bread, in a market cart!

We disgorged some of the rations at Les Iris, and Mr Smith looked round, and then we drove to the Villa Robinson, the *annexe*, where Mr Smith had some work to inspect, and then we went on to Ignotus. Ignotus is a medium-sized white villa, with a small garden, at Paris-Plage, a mile further on. It is a sort of rest home for Y.M.s. We go out there for odd

nights and week-ends when we are recovering from various diseases, or want a rest. Jock was sweet when I went home. I asked him how he liked my new car; he grinned and said he didn't quite know whether he liked me so much behind the horse as in Archie. I don't think he had quite got over my yell. Jock is a dear—he is a little short Scot with a Glengarry bonnet, and he is always on traffic duty, and at the various corners; he changes about each week. He talks the broadest Scotch with a perfectly priceless grin.

I informed him that Fox was much better than Archie because it was so nice not to have to keep on cranking her up. He then asked if I liked cranking up Archie, and in very forcible language I said no.

"I'm sure no one would ever know it then," said Jock. "You're jist the happiest person in this base, it cheers us up to look at you." I grinned, and said I thought it was because everybody spoilt me.

"*I* don't ever get spoilt—I wish someone would spoil me," Jock said with a noise between a sigh and a grunt.

"Poor Jock—I'll spoil you," I said. "We'll all spoil you—what would you like us to do?"

Jock thought deeply for a minute or two. "Well," he said, "I think I'd like you to run into me with that horse and cart. I think I'd be fairly spoilt then, wouldn't a, noo?" And we both chuckled, and I said I'd think about it. The policeman in the square had something to say about it too, and was very facetious about my charger.

CHAPTER XX

LAST LEAVE

Betty crossed from France on Thursday, 21st February 1918. Major M. escorted her.

They had a great railway journey up from Folkestone; the carriage was full of brass hats, and Betty said they all behaved like schoolboys, and played all sorts of games.

On Friday, the 22nd, she came home. I met her, and when she jumped out of the train, I thought I'd never seen her look so sweet. She had on her long khaki overcoat, and she had two service stripes on her sleeve this time—I was so proud of her.

I had made her room look so pretty, and had made her new tablecovers, and a new lampshade, and she had a lovely new chest of drawers, and the room was full of flowers, and looked, as she said, "just heavenly."

She played so much, and as we were using

Taken on her Last Leave, 1918.

the little rose room upstairs as a sitting-room, I used to sit there with the door open, and listen to the lovely music. I scribbled this one Sunday evening in April, while she was playing the piano.

BETTY

When Betty comes, the house is full of light
And warmth from her sweet heart, and bright.
You can't be sad,—the days are pure delight,
When Betty comes.

When Betty plays, and round the gallery swell
Sweet waves of music that she loves so well,
On all my heart she lays a lovely spell—
When Betty plays.

When Betty goes—why, then, put out the light!
I needn't climb her stair to say good-night,
And tie her pigtails—an imposing sight,—
When Betty goes.

She told us heaps of stories about her work in Étaples, and I often wished she could speak into a "dictaphone" so that I could hear it again when she had gone back.

I remember her describing how she had a heavy car load of people to take from Boulogne, including a nice young Highland soldier—I'll

try and tell the story in her words: "He was quite young, and a dear, and *very* shy, and had come from some far-away Highland home, and he'd been travelling for goodness knows how long, and I saw he was dropping with sleep, and his head kept on nodding. So presently his head reposed on my manly shoulder. Poor dear, I knew how awful he'd feel when he woke up, so I determined I'd let him sleep as long as he could, with his head comfortably reclining on me, and I managed to drive all right, though my left arm got a bit stiff, and when he woke up, I carefully kept my head turned the other way, so that his face had time to cool down, and I kept on talking so that he should think I hadn't noticed he'd been asleep and snoring in my ear. He was such a nice shy Scotch boy with such a lovely accent!"

She told us how the "relatives" had sometimes a maddening habit of not believing she knew the way to the various hostels when she met them at Boulogne, *e.g.*: One dark and pouring night she met the boat, collected up the relatives, sternly forbade them to move from the spot where she put them, and went to

wind up her car. It was pitch dark and pouring. When she came back, of course one man was missing; she hunted up and down the quay and sidings, but couldn't find him—went back to the boat to borrow a lantern from the captain, who, of course, knew her quite well. He lent her his lantern on solemn promise to return it, and with its aid, Betty at last found the missing relative, and brought him back to the fold. He was asking the way to —— from a group of people. Betty sternly rebuked him, and led him gently but firmly back to where he'd been first set. Then she set out to find the captain and return the lantern, but this time the captain was missing. At last he was found "in a dark little house, hidden among coils of rope and buckets and things," and so the company at last started on its journey to the various hospitals and hostels.

On Friday, 15th, she and I set off in great form to have a real jaunt together in London. It was the first time she and I had gone away like this for grown-up frivolity, and we were both so excited. You see Betty was eighteen when the war began, just the age when most girls look

forward to, and get, all sorts of fun and "good times," and Betty *loved* these things.

On Easter Sunday, Emil, F——, Betty and I and Jenny went to the 8 o'clock Celebration at Christ Church. That is the last time I went with her, and I shall never forget it.

From General East

22*nd March* 1918.

. . . I see your Betty is not coming back at once. Do not encourage her to stay too long at home, as she is badly wanted here. . . .

Grey Gables, Harrogate,
14*th April* 1918.

Darling Woodie,—I am so sorry I have been such a long time answering your letter, and thanking you for the sweet little egg you sent me. I have been having rather a hectic time over my permit. I was expecting it every day, and I have now been told that all permits are held up for the time being, with all this fighting. Of course I am dreadfully disappointed, as I hate to be out of it all, especially just now. I have had a perfectly gorgeous

leave, and didn't really want to go back a bit, when I thought that I could—if you can understand such grammar! You know the family took such a nice house in Scarborough last year, and we are going to get the same house again. . . . I missed it all last year, and I shan't be able to bear it if I miss everything again this year. You see I must be in France four months before I get leave, and we go to Scarborough in August. However, I must hope for the best. I've had a ripping long leave this time, and haven't had a single cold, which is rather good for me. (I must tap wood!)

All this time Betty's permit was held up. The big German push which began on 21st March was in full progress, troops were being rushed across to France, and no Y.M.C.A. women workers were allowed to return to their work in France during those anxious days. However, at last Betty's permit came through. On Monday, the 6th May, we left; as we went out of the gate, she turned and called out to Jennie, "Now remember, you're all to go to Scarborough in August, and I shall come there on my next leave."

She and I came to town together. On Tuesday, 7th May, I saw her off at Charing Cross by the midday train. She gave me a hug before she got in, and we said to each other the old parting words we always used whenever we were going away from each other. I whispered in her ear, "The Lord is with you," and she whispered back, "And with thy spirit." Nobody heard. And the train went out of the station. That is the last time I saw her sweet face—7th May.

There is nothing but happiness in the remembrance of that last leave—there was a great number of visitors, much loved aunts and uncles and friends on leave, and a good deal of tennis. But best of all remembrances to me is one walk across the Stray, when she said to me, "No girl ever had such understanding parents as I've got." And when I said, feeling *en veine* for original remarks, and full of pride in her, "You know, Bet, I do *like* you so, as well as loving you: you're such a good friend, even if you weren't my daughter, bless you," she was delighted with the idea of our being *friends*.

CHAPTER XXI

MAY, 1918

Y.M.C.A.,
A.P.O., S. 11, B.E.F.,
10th May 1918.

My own darling Mammy,—I was so glad to get your letter this morning, darling.

We had quite a good crossing, and I wasn't sick. There was the most awful wind blowing at Folkestone. I was nearly blown off the quay, and was expecting a rough crossing, but there wasn't so much wind at sea. We left at 4 and arrived at 6. Half-way across it began to rain, and I retired to my cabin. A sea-bird's egg missed us by a few yards, but we didn't know till we were landed. I wish I'd been on deck all the time as I might have seen something. Joyce met me and motored me back. . . .

Heaps of my old friends are still here, and it is nice to see them all again, and they've been

saying such nice pretty things to me. The people who work at the *Lion d'Argent* with me are ever so nice, and I like the work very much, and there is heaps to do. . . .

The weather here is gorgeous; lovely sun, but not too hot.

Every evening I go to the station with Chappie and we give away food and drink to the people who are having to leave their homes in the north. It's *so* interesting but I can't tell you much about anything. We are all cheerful, and they were surprised to hear of the fuss and grousing in Blighty. *They* aren't worried about anything. I knew they wouldn't be.

Good-bye, darling. Did you get my telegram? I sent one home too.

BETTY.

Y.M.C.A.,
A.P.O., S. 11, B.E.F.,
FRANCE, 17*th May* 1918.

MY DARLING MOTHER,—I am so glad you are going down to Devonshire with Noel.

Mind you get a good rest and do nothing all the time.

The weather here is so hot we none of us know what to do with ourselves. I've bought a ripping panama hat, which is allowed, and the *tout ensemble* looks *très bien.*

Darling, many happy returns of its 16th birthday; its little present hasn't arrived, but you will receive it anon. I'm sending it . . . from the nice shop I told you of. I hope you will like them. They will arrive late I am afraid, but they are coming from Paris.

I simply love my new work, and I am so happy. I get two mornings off a week, *i.e.* Monday till 2.30 and Thursday till 4 p.m. The other people there are dears, and I love them. They often go away together on their mornings off, and I am in sole charge, which I love. . . . I love it all.

The other morning Chappie and I went by train to P.-P. and spent the morning sitting on the beach. It was heavenly. All the cavalry were out on the beach and tearing about and doing the most thrilling things, thousands of them, and the sun was shining on

their lances, till they looked like huge twinkling diamonds. We didn't come back till lunch time. Cheerio!

BET.

It is difficult to write of Betty's last term of service, between 7th May, when she got back to work, and 30th May, when she slipped through the Barrier. Her friends told us that she arrived back "simply bursting with happiness, even for happy Betty." She was so pleased when she got into the Maison Dacquet that she picked up Olive (a small person) and carried her round the kitchen, and finally deposited her flat on the kitchen table, to the joy of the French servants.

On Sunday, 19th May, there was a terrific air raid over Étaples. Just at this time we began to be very anxious about our son, who was very ill at Harrow. I have often had said to me, since May, "I wonder you were not more anxious about Betty while Étaples was being raided." This next letter will perhaps make it a little easier to understand why I was not

anxious ; it was *impossible* to be fearful where Betty was concerned. "It's a great stunt"—not a word of fear on her part, or of anything to rouse our fears.

Y.M.C.A.,
A.P.O., S. 11, B.E.F.,
23rd May 1918.

My own darling Mother,—I've just got your letter with the enclosure. . . . G. came down to see me last Saturday. We had great fun, though he couldn't stay very long. I went out to lunch with him, and then I went in his car to P.-P. and we strolled back on the beach, and I ordered my cabin for the season. Four of us are going to share one till the end of September—100 francs, which when divided among four isn't a bit bad, is it? . . .

Letters are taking ages to cross now. Did you ever get my first letter about the crossing and the sea-bird's egg?

The weather has been awfully hot, and we haven't known how to exist. I don't know whether you hear much news of this part of the world—I imagine not. Anyhow we are all

well and flourishing, though we don't sleep here. We all go out and sleep in P.-P. and in the woods—we find it "healthier." We are having a great time. Chappie and I and another girl share a room in a villa we have taken over away in the woods. We leave here the last of anyone. Sometimes on bicycles and sometimes in cars. Some of us are in tents and huts, and the men in the woods and on the open verandahs of the house. It's a great stunt. I believe V—— S—— is going on leave. She will tell you all the news. I can say nothing. Our house is full of souvenirs![1] "Light Railways" and "Roads" came down the other day to see how we were. They couldn't stay long. . . .

Darling, I've lost the money order Daddy sent me. I was walking about with "Roads," and flourishing Dumpy's letter about, and when I got home the money order was napoo. I hunted everywhere—but of course couldn't

[1] We saw her bedroom when we went to France in February (1919). A great hole blown out of the ceiling almost over the bed had then been plastered up; the glass and the wooden casements of the windows, which had all been blown out, were replaced by temporary oiled paper. The yard under the window still bore witness to the many raids. These were the "souvenirs."

find it. If you could bring yourself to send me another, would you send at the same time my allowance, which is due on 1st June. . . .

I hope you will like the little present I am sending you. They came from Paris.—I love you.

BUNÇIE.

A hug to the breadwinner, and also to the murderer.[1]

[1] Grimmy, her dog.

CHAPTER XXII

30th MAY (CORPUS CHRISTI DAY)

On 26th May we were sent for to Harrow, and during the whole of that week we waited anxiously for our boy to be pronounced out of danger. A letter was written to Betty on Monday, 27th May, telling her of his serious condition, and promising to send for her if the doctor advised it. [The doctor had said "Yesterday (Sunday 26th) I should have told you to send for her, if you had been here; now I don't think you need, at any rate, not just now."] Betty got this letter of 27th May on the evening of Wednesday 29th. She came for comfort to her dear friend Olive Stewart-Moore, who never failed her. On 30th May (Corpus Christi Day), before beginning her day's work, she wrote to her mother and to her brother. These were the last letters she ever wrote—full of love and concern for us

three, but not a word of fear for herself. They were found next day by Olive Stewart-Moore lying on the table ready for post. Again, not a word of fear nor of the constant danger in which she and the whole Base were living.

To her Brother

Y.M.C.A.,
A.P.O., S. 11, B.E.F.,
30th May 1918.

DARLING OLD JARSY,—I am so sorry you've been on the sick list, poor little dear. I wish I could come over and hold your hand. Be quick and get well and have a good holiday, and enjoy yourself and do nothing. How lovely for you having the wids with you. I envy you.

We have been having very exciting times here, as I expect you know by the papers, but we are still alive and kicking—especially kicking—though we find it healthier to leave at nights. I shall have lots of stories to tell you when I come back. I only wish I could write them all to you, but I can't. Some of the minor incidents are, officers walking about in pyjamas and tin helmets—ladies in night attire

and motor caps, and naked babies. It's all very amusing and pathetic, and I'll tell you all about it when I come home. Four of us have hired a bathing cabin for the season, and we can't think of a name. We have had many suggestions, among them—"Oh! I say," "Excuse me," "Splash me," "?" "Susan," and many others. Please suggest something. I must go and *manger* now.

Good-bye, little brother—*je t'embrasse*, when nobody is looking.—Your loving

BET. x x

T. L. I. W. Y. JARSY.

Thursday, 30th May, was her last day here; the story of that night is best told by those who shared it with her.

ÉTAPLES ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT

General Secretary—ADAM SCOTT

Y.M.C.A., B.E.F.,
Friday, 31st May 1918.

DEAR MR AND MRS STEVENSON,—You will have had from the Military Authorities the sad news of Betty's death last evening. I scarcely

know how to begin to write you. She was the darling of the whole Base staff, and was so loved by everybody that we are all sort of dazed by her loss. She had been busy all day, in the afternoon at the Lion d'Argent, and later, along with Mrs Stewart-Moore, with the refugees at the station.

Owing to a car breakdown, a group of workers were later than usual in starting for Les Iris, where we had been sending all our ladies to sleep recently for greater safety. A very early raid sent us all to the cellars, and after it was over we put the party of ladies on two cars to send them out of the danger zone in case the planes returned. We were held up half-way, and a second raid came over, forcing us all to take shelter under the banks by the side of the road. Everything went well until an enemy plane, just as the raid was finishing, dropped several bombs in open country near us, probably in order to get rid of them before returning. One bomb killed Betty instantaneously, and wounded two other workers, who are in hospital. I was by her side within a minute of the bomb falling, but nothing could be done.

She could not have felt it, as she was shot through the left temple. She was taken to hospital at once.

The funeral will take place, we expect, to-morrow, and will be with full military honours as an officer of the British Army.

We cannot realise she has gone from us yet, and her place in the hearts of us all will not be filled. Only the other day we were talking of her as the sunshine of the whole place. Knowing how much she has been to everyone who knew her out here, we can have some small feeling of what her loss must mean to you both.

I can only say on behalf of us all how deep is our sympathy with you all. We mourn her as a very dear friend.

Mrs Stewart-Moore was with her all through, and will doubtless be writing you.—Believe me, yours very sincerely, ADAM SCOTT.

A.P.O., S. 11, B.E.F.,
31st May.

MY DEAR MRS STEVENSON,—I really don't know how to write you to-day, I am in such

distress. I am Betty's little "Chappie," who loved her with all my heart, and to-day my heart feels as if it had been ground to pieces after our experience of last night. Through no one's fault we were caught last night in the open, five of us, and we had to shelter behind a hedge, with very little cover; we were in a most exposed place. Unfortunately, just when we prayed it was all over, a burst came just beside her (I was at the other side of the road) and got the child in the side of her temple. The doctors say she could never have felt anything. The others got slight wounds, and Mr Scott and I escaped—how, we don't know. We did all in our power—got a car and away to hospital, but all in vain.

Dear Mrs Stevenson, if you would like me to come, and if you think it would help you in any way, I would cross over and come to you at once, and I hope you will let me know, as I could tell you so much more of her than by writing. All her little treasures are safe with me, and will be until you have them.

Since she came back she has been radiantly well and happy, and loved by all—never can I

tell you how much. She was so upset about your boy's illness, and always came to me with all her joys and sorrows—we just shared everything.

I can't say much more as I am so shaken up and sad. I did not feel my own loss very much more than this, as she restored to me my faith and the sunshine of life.

God in His great mercy send you comfort.—Believe me, yours most sorrowfully,

OLIVE STEWART-MOORE.

. . . The darkness of the night was for us then, not her. Mr Scott and I walked about all that night until dawn, as we could not rest, and I did not let him tell anyone until the morning, as we felt it was sacrilege; and when people met us and said, "Is all well?" we said, "Yes, all is well," and so it was with her then. . . .

8th June 1918.

DEAR MR AND MRS STEVENSON,—I feel that I ought to write to you as I was with Betty when she was hit. It seems useless for me to try to say how sad we have been made by her

death; she was known and loved by everyone at Étaples on account of her happy smile, which never left her. She was not nervous at all. I was surprised at her calmness and steadiness.

I had done all I could to make her as secure as possible. She was wearing my shrapnel helmet, and we were well down at the bottom of the bank. She suffered no pain at all; I did not feel a tremor, but after the noise and dust of the explosion had died down I spoke to her, asking her if she was all right, and she did not answer.

We got her to the hospital at once in a car, but the doctors could only tell us that she must have been killed instantaneously and painlessly.

I am very glad to be able to say that she was smiling in death.

I was hit in the foot by a piece of the same bomb, but was able to carry on until we got to the hospital. There I was again bombed the next night, though fortunately I was not damaged this time, but the hospital was evacuated, and I, as a civilian patient, have made my own way home here. The doctor says that I shall be all right again in a few months, and I

sometimes wish I had been killed instead of poor Betty.

I hope you will understand that she could have suffered no pain whatever; her untroubled smile vouches for that.

I wish above all things that I could have done something to save her, but I had already done every possible thing. If there is anything else you would like to ask me, do not hesitate; I am not too ill to answer questions.

In closing, may I say how sincerely I and all the Y.M. staff feel for you in your sorrow.—Believe me, yours sincerely,

NORMAN PHILLIPS, Y.M.C.A.

. . . Her smile never left her; in my dreams of that awful night I still see her, smiling in an unshaken faith that all would be well, whatever happened. . . .

A.P.O., S. 11.
1st June.

MY DEAR MRS STEVENSON,—We have just come back from putting the little one in her last resting-place. She had a soldier's funeral,

and a beautiful service, and some lovely wreaths and flowers, and I can assure you there was not a soul there whose heart did not ache with sorrow for you.

I am sending you on some letters she wrote on Thursday, and which I found in her room since, under some things. I am going to pack up all her things and put them in a place of safety, in case the house should get hit here one night.

We did not get much sleep last night again, but were safely out from here.

I can't write much more as I feel so much, but little Miss J—— who was up at the hospital where we took Bet, and whom Bet loved so much, said she saw her last, and that the dear little face was so sweet, and as peaceful as it was always, and there was no sign of any shock or suffering.—Believe me as ever, with much love and sympathy,

OLIVE STEWART-MOORE.

I feel her dear spirit round the place . . . . You see, dear, I was blessed in having her up to the end. . . .

I must tell you about the funeral, as I am

afraid no one properly did. We all went to the soldiers' cemetery and lined up at each side of the little chapel, and waited there till they carried her out, with a Union Jack rolled round just like a soldier. We went up and put our flowers and our love on the top, and the little procession started on its way down, the chaplain in his white robes in front, soldiers wheeling the little carriage; and the bugler; and then we came in twos. I walked directly behind with Effie, and then the drivers, and Lady Cooper and Mr Scott, and all the others.

The Burial Service was read and the 90th Psalm, and the chaplain spoke a few words, telling of her work, and how she had died for her country like a soldier. It was a beautiful and touching service, and was attended by her fellow-workers, people from Boulogne, her soldier friends, and the French sent a French Staff Officer from G.H.Q.,[1] to pay his respects with the others; he stood, a splendid figure, and saluted as she was carried by.

We did not have a hymn as it was a military funeral, but it was a beautiful service, and we

[1] See page 255.

had some verses which I have marked in my Bible to show you. And then at the last the bugler sounded the Last Post, and there was not a dry eye amongst us all, and I held on tight to my courage, and prayed so hard for you. Then they lowered her gently in, and we stepped forward and sprinkled her little bed with flowers.

Dear, it was beautiful, and it is a lovely spot with the river and the sea, and the woods all over the other side. She went home with all her courage, and a smile on her dear lips, and her lovely soul had gone without suffering. . . .

O. S. M.

CHAPTER XXIII

MEMORIES

I HAVE never seen her look lovelier than the time she came back from leave. "Joy and sunshine incarnate" she was. She and I were inseparable, and our rooms had a door between them, and the fun we used to have! She was so witty and clever, but I need not tell you what you know more of than I do.

I packed up all her dear things with my own hands, and they will be safe with me until I can get them safely to you.

She was so unselfish and thoughtful, especially after she came back, and she said, "Chappie, I do think I've grown up a little, on leave."

I go to her little resting-place, and keep it nice with flowers. People who could not come sent me money for flowers, and I take them up. . . . Such a lot of soldiers go up too,

which I love—the men she worked for. She will never be forgotten here by any of us.

O. S. M.

. . . When I came to France first, I can never forget that it was your Bet who brought sunshine and laughter back to me again. No one could be with her and not benefit by the radiance.

She insisted that I should share all her little "binges" when her Uncle Lionel came, and seeing me happy again made her enjoy it doubly. . . .

Latterly we discussed many serious subjects together, including death. We used to walk over the bridge on lovely nights after the station work was done, and then we talked a lot. That was before death and terror lurked so near us. She said the only thing that made her afraid of death was the leaving behind of you, her dear ones, and then I said how since so many of my dear ones had faced it so fearlessly and gone over the line, it seemed so much less terrifying, and a simple thing. Little did I think then that God wanted her home to His beautiful garden.

The fateful night she missed you, and wanted me to love her as she was so worried about you and Jars, and I held her in my arms and loved and petted her.

I have never known her so happy here as she was this time. She loved her club and the work, and each night, when she had done, she rushed up to help me at the station with my refugees, and the joy of the little Scotch Mackie, the orderly, when I went out to dine perhaps, and left them to do it alone was what I called most unflattering to me.

I have had dozens of nice letters about her from people who worked here and saw us together. . . .

I will keep her treasures safely, and her little grave nice as long as I am near it.—As ever,

O. S. M.

These cards I brought away from some flowers on her grave to send you, and they are only from two of many unnamed soldiers. . . .

It just seemed to all who knew and worked with her in the last three weeks of her life on earth, that God had already touched her with

His divine hand, and that already she had a vision of the greater glory that awaited her. Everyone she spoke to she helped, and her smile was like a benediction to us all—this fact has been commented on by many, but especially by the soldiers she served in her club. It seemed as though she wanted to give us strength to carry on through the dark days that lay before us. To one who perhaps loved her best of all her many friends and fellow-workers in France, and who had watched with great interest this fine soul develop, it was a revelation, as one had seen her in many phases, but never before perhaps as "Betty the woman," and one could see and picture her in the future, happy, gracious, and kindly, never for a moment in her own great happiness forgetting those of her fellow-creatures less favoured than she.

One feels that this is so, and that God has called her to a higher and nobler work, and that He gave to all of us a glimpse of what she had attained in her higher life.

Standing by her little graveside one's heart ached and ached at the thought of one's personal loss, and the fact that not again on this earth

would one see the sunny presence, and hear the merry voice and the quick wit and jest, and one sorrowed in perhaps a selfish way.

Suddenly one had a vision of the greater glory, and one saw the erect and gallant figure entering into the kingdom of everlasting light, and one heard the Master's voice as He saw her, say, "Enter in my child, and well done thy work on earth."

Then with a smile of ineffable sweetness she entered in, breathing around those who remained a spirit of courage and sweetness, and the vision passed.

One turned away hopefully, and started one's daily routine feeling that the world had been made a better place, because Betty had lived in it, and that she had left behind a fresh and fragrant spirit which would last through all time. For her sake, and for the sake of all the other glorious young lives, one must take up one's burden and answer the country's call, and do all one can with the vision of their glory and sweetness to guide us on to the end.

These are a few words very badly expressed by one who loved her so, and into whose

saddened and shadowed life she helped to bring back joy and laughter, and sweetness and wholesomeness again, and in whose memory she remains for all time as a veritable "Gift of God and love and light."

. . . I wanted to tell you that as the sun was shining so beautifully this morning, I went up and got some lovely flowers, great dark red dahlias, great yellow marguerites and lovely scented carnations, and I took them up to the cemetery and put them there. I go up when I am sad and tired and perplexed, and I stay there a little, and it seems as though the spirit of peace dwelt there truly, as it helps me so, and I come away readier to go on with the problems that face one. . . .

HEADQUARTERS, Y.M.C.A.,
ÉTAPLES.

It is with very great diffidence that I attempt to put on paper an appreciation of Betty—so impossible it seems to convey through the medium of the printed page any adequate impression of that bright, happy, devoted life. It is not that she was in any way abnormal or

saintly or unnatural; Betty's whole charm was that she was so thoroughly natural and normal, so high-spirited and mischievous, with a delightful sense of humour, yet with a fine maidenly reserve, a deep reverence for things sacred, and a very strong sense of duty.

She came to us along with a young friend when neither of them was more than twenty. They were our youngest workers and were immediately dubbed "The Babies." Everyone was interested in them and loved them. Betty's work was to drive a car, sometimes with stores to the huts, at other times with lecturers, concert parties, and entertainers. She also took her share in the transport to and from the hospitals of relatives of dangerously wounded officers and men who were here as our guests. It was amusing to note how—while the senior drivers planned to relieve Betty and Joyce of the long runs, especially at night—the two "Babies" would spend any spare time they had in conspiring to do the longest, hardest runs of the day, and in persuading the others to allow them to take over the night journeys. And then, when the number of "relatives"

increased, and all the drivers had to make these long night runs, great was their joy. They felt that at last they were carrying their full share and being allowed to take a real part in the sacrificial service in which the men they sought to serve were engaged.

Everywhere Betty made friends; the orderlies at the huts all loved to see her, the military police on point duty all felt that she was their little friend, and the workers at the Stores were always ready to load and unload Betty's car. She had a way of getting even the garage boys, who were badly overworked, to find time "just to come and *look* at" her car when it wasn't going well. On the day of her funeral I found that the men in charge of the mortuary and cemetery were her devoted friends. They had seen her comforting the wives and mothers she brought to the gravesides of their menfolk. In the Lion d'Argent, where she was latterly engaged in canteen work, she had many friends; she had a smile and a cheery word for everyone who entered the building. Among her fellow-workers, too, Betty was always a favourite; one has no hesitation in saying that she was

the most popular of all. Wherever she went she carried sunshine with her. Full of mischief and pranks, and humour and jokes at the expense of all of us, yet so gentle and sympathetic with anyone in trouble, she had no enemies and no rivals. The mess brightened up perceptibly on the dullest and rainiest day when Betty entered.

During the retreat in May, when French women and children, driven from their homes, were passing through Étaples in thousands, Betty was one of the two ladies who, night after night, gave food and drink to these poor refugees on the station, after her day's work at the canteen was over, and it was there she had been working until ten o'clock on the fatal night. When the raids came she was just the same happy girl, brave and calm in the midst of danger, bright and cheerful up to the last moment, and then died with her beautiful smile still on her lips. Happily, death was instantaneous, and she was spared the agony of wounds and suffering. I do not think there was one of all her fellow-workers who would not willingly have been her substitute in order that

she might continue that rich, young life so full of promise. On every side we asked the same question—"Why *Betty*?"

She was a true Englishwoman; more than that one cannot say. She was worthy, well worthy, of the race of heroes who have ungrudgingly given their lives in this great struggle.

ADAM SCOTT.

The Croix de Guerre avec Palme was bestowed on her.

"Le Maréchal de France, Commandant en Chef les Armées Françaises de l'Est, cite à l'Ordre de l'Armée :

MADEMOISELLE STEVENSON, BETTY, de l'Y.M.C.A. :

A fait preuve, dans ses fonctions de chauffeuse et de dame de cantine, de beaucoup de courage et de dévouement. A été mortellement blessée au cours d'un bombardement aérien.

Au Grand Quartier Général, le 17 Février, 1919.

Le Maréchal,

Commandant en Chef les Armées Françaises de l'Est,

PETAIN."

CHAPTER XXIV

LETTERS

From H. H. Princess Helena Victoria

78 Pall Mall,
3rd June 1918.

Dear Mrs Stevenson,—I write as President, and in the name of the whole Ladies' Auxiliary Committee, to tender you our deepest sympathy in the great loss you have sustained. Your daughter has indeed laid down her life for her country, just as any soldier at the front—and I am proud to have been associated with her in the work of the Y.M.C.A. She had endeared herself to all who worked with her, and she is a great loss to us all in the Association.

Words at times like these can bring little comfort, but I should like you and her family to know how deeply I sympathise with you.—Believe me, yours sincerely,

Helena Victoria.

STIRLING,
6th June 1918.

DEAR MRS STEVENSON,—I heard last night news from Étaples which horrified and saddened me beyond measure. I was out there last year during July and August, and again during November and December.

As my position was that of Deputy-secretary, director of the religious work, and, in an undefined way, pastor of the Base, I knew everyone. Your dear daughter and I had this bond to facilitate our acquaintance, that I was a friend and a relative by marriage of her uncle Dr Macgregor of Edinburgh. Of the inner circle of workers in Étaples she was the life and soul. We all admired and loved her, and feared to come under the strokes of her amazingly quick wit. Canon Simpson, of St Paul's, London, and I were favourites of hers, we persuaded ourselves. She celebrated us in verses, copies of which, I believe, she sent home. I am the "D.D." whom she gently satirised.

Her brave, noble figure is before me as I write. She exercised a rare, healthy, bracing

influence on us all. We had a profound respect for the strength and dignity of her character. In Mrs Stewart-Moore she had a very true friend, who watched over her with a jealous care for her well-being, and a warm devotion. But everyone who knew her was proud to be associated with her and get any recognition from her, and everyone would have championed her interests had occasion demanded it.

I cannot put in words what I feel about the tragic event, nor find language to express my sympathy for you. I think of my own eldest daughter but a few years younger, and am silenced.

But I pray God that you may be comforted by those sweet ministries of Divine love which avail when human help is utterly insufficient. That brilliant, promising young life, which brought quickening of mind and gladness of heart to all it touched—so sweet and unalloyed and splendid in its nature—cannot be ended.—Believe me, yours very sincerely,

A. B. Macaulay.

. . . I appreciate very highly your kindness in sending me a photograph of Betty. I have kept the one which reminds me of the first day I met her, and stirs up in my memory associations of many a happy conversation. It seems to me an admirable likeness, showing her wonderful self-possession and dignity of character, representing her mind in that state of poise, ready for any emergency, with speech that was never common-place, which used to delight us all. She lends great distinction to the uniform. . . .

I shall treasure the photograph jealously, and get constant help from the memory of her splendid devotion and unselfishness. . . .

A. B. M.

c/o Intelligence Office,
A.P.O., S. 11., B.E.F.,
France, *2nd June* 1918.

Mr and Mrs A. G. Stevenson,—With a heavy heart I take my pen and endeavour to convey to you my deep sympathy regarding your daughter's death.

I have known her for a long time now, and I

have had some of the nicest times of my life in her company with Mrs Stewart-Moore.

To think that one so young should fall a victim to this war. Oh, it is hard to bear, but I don't know how you all feel at home.

I can only express my feelings on paper, but no doubt Mrs Moore will have told you about the Scotch kiltie in her letters, if your daughter did not. I was one of her special friends and we had such nice times together in this place, and I miss her nice smile and joke now, which I always got in the mornings and at night. You see she was always at the station helping with the refugees who passed through, and was so nice and pleasant to them all, and everyone had such a nice word for her.

Again expressing the sympathy of our staff here with my own.—I remain, yours sincerely,

ROBERT C. MACKIE.[1]

From CORPORAL BARKER

. . . I have seen you working together so often, and well know what a strong bond of love and sympathy there was between you, so

[1] "Kiltie."

I can appreciate something of what the loss must mean to you. At her daily work in the hut,[1] the men always knew that there was one spot in the dreary depot, where they could be sure of a smile and a kind word. Then by taking up and carrying out in France for so long, work of a much more strenuous nature, Miss Stevenson proved her steadfastness of purpose and large-heartedness. She was indeed fearless, kind, and good, and she gave her life for the great cause for which we are fighting. . . .

British Expeditionary Force,
Y.M.C.A., A.P.O., S. 17.

Dear Mrs Stevenson,—Words fail me to tell you how deeply I grieve for you in the loss of your dear little Betty.

Certainly God deals with us in a very mysterious way. Of all of us workers out here to think that she should have been the one taken — the life, spirit and wit of this Base. Everybody loved her. I can't tell you what a sorrow it is to us all.

[1] In 1916 at St Denis.

It certainly is a noble little life, a very heroic and noble death, and you will feel comforted that there was no suffering.

I am enclosing in this letter a card that was attached to some lovely flowers sent to the funeral by one of the many Tommies whom she was kind to, and who adored her.

I never think of that hymn, "All things bright and beautiful, all things great and small, the Lord God made them all," without thinking of Betty.

This has cast a shadow on us all; dear little Betty, for her all is well, but it is her dearest who are left that are to be pitied.—With love and deepest sympathy from yours very sorrowfully,

ETHEL BRODIE.

From LADY COOPER

ON ACTIVE SERVICE
WITH THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE,
A.P.O., S. 11,
23*rd June* 1918.

DEAR MRS STEVENSON,—Ever since your Betty left us it has been in my mind to write

to you, but I have waited for a quiet moment, which has come at last to-day.

Could I have told you anything special about her last days with us I would have written at once, but unluckily I never saw so little of her as I did just lately—because she was working in our hut in the town and no longer drove me to and from my hut, a mile out—and so I missed the continual sunshine a sight of her always brought me. I have daughters and grand-daughters of my own, and love all young things, and there was a radiance about Betty that endeared her to me.

We were so *proud* of her: she and Joyce Scott were such children and had done such arduous and splendid work so joyously and eagerly. I do feel her life was a wonderful one—so *brimful* of usefulness and happiness, ended gloriously in one second, having made use to the full of all the wondrous chances of service to her country which were placed by Providence in her path.

Life could never have brought her more, and she has missed the pain and sorrow which cannot be escaped in longer lives.

Someone wrote to me: "Poor little Betty, and yet I don't really believe it is anything but a great enrichment and illumination." I am sure she is very near you still, and I pray God will help and comfort you and your husband.

At her funeral it was so much in my mind that all the circumstances would have pleased her so. Some of the soldiers still carry flowers to the grave.—Yours sincerely,

HARRIET COOPER.

P.S.—Did Betty tell you our joke about being spontaneous? Canon Simpson used it in preaching, and Betty came up in delight and told me if I ever found fault with her (I never did) she would say, "Lady Cooper, I am being spontaneous." I shall never hear that word again without recalling her bright face, and thinking of myself saying, "Betty, *are* you being spontaneous?"

From MATRON-IN-CHIEF, B.E.F.

. . . Her Majesty Queen Alexandra has graciously sent me a telegram asking that her sympathy should be conveyed to the relatives

of those who had died or suffered through these terrible air raids which we have had recently, and as your daughter was working in the same cause as that for which our nurses lost their lives, I am sending you a copy.—With deep sympathy with you in your sorrow, believe me, yours sincerely,

E. M. M'Carthy,
Matron in Chief, B.E.F.

c/o C.O., Westminster Hospital,
A.P.O., S. 79, France,
4th June 1918.

Dear Madam,—Nothing which has happened here has cast such a shadow of gloom on us all as the calling away of your dear child. She was loved and admired by everyone, and none of us will ever forget her brave, bright devotion to duty. She set an example to us all. It was very often her work to bring either supplies or visitors out to this rest-house, of which I have been in charge over a year, and never once did she arrive with a long face, however bad the weather, or how-

ever many hours she had been at work. I often told her how sorry I felt that she should have to come so far, or so late, or in such heavy rain or snow, but she always had a gay word in answer, and a smile on her young face. She was by far the most obliging and pleasant of all the ladies driving for us here, and would do anything in her power to help in a difficulty. Her memory will always be cherished by me, as by a great many others. She laid down her young life a sacrifice for her country as much as anyone has ever done. She died a soldier's death, and you must be proud of her. It is a comfort to know that she probably passed without even feeling the shock, and that her bright little face and figure were not disfigured in any way. I was not able to attend the funeral, as duty detained me here, far away from the place where she was laid to rest, but I hope to visit her grave before long. You may be sure it will be well tended.

Her little dog is here in the room with me as I write, and I love him for her sake.—I remain, yours sincerely,

JESSIE LEETE.

From Miss Leete

. . . How many times during last winter she came out to Ignotus, to bring stores or people in the most bitter weather—rain, or snow, or gale of wind—sometimes quite late in the evening; and when I would say something commiserating, how cheerfully she would refuse sympathy, "Oh, that's all right! It's all in the day's work! I shan't take any harm." And if I urged her to come in and rest and have a warm for a few minutes, how bravely she used to say—"Quite impossible! I've got two more runs before I finish up, and I can't spare another minute." She did work hard! and always with a smile. . . .

I have told her story to all whom I have met since I came on leave, for I think such a grand example ought to be widely made known. . . .

THE LIVERPOOL MERCHANTS'
MOBILE HOSPITAL.

B.E.F., FRANCE,
11*th June* 1918.

MY DEAR MRS STEVENSON,—I cannot possibly describe to you my grief when your dear daughter, Betty, was brought into this hospital. The only consolation about the horrible business is that she was killed instantaneously. . . .

The dear girl was a very great personal friend of mine, and everybody in the camp loved her, and she gave her life whilst in the execution of her duty in France. Unfortunately I hadn't seen her since her return from her last leave, but I had often heard that she was in splendid health and good spirits. Please convey to your husband, and accept yourself, my deepest sympathy.—Yours very sincerely,

N. RAW,
Lt.-Colonel, O.C.

Y.M.C.A. Headquarters for France,
A.P.O., S. 1, B.E.F.,
3rd June 1918.

Dear Mrs Stevenson,—In common with all our workers I share the very deep sorrow and true sympathy with you at this time. Your daughter died as she lived, in unselfish service of others. She spread sunshine wherever she went, and all our hearts are sore because she has been taken.—Yours with very deep sympathy,

Oliver M'Cowan.

On Active Service,
British Expeditionary Force,
9th June 1918.

Dear Mrs Stevenson,—Excuse a note from a stranger, but I felt I must just send a word of sympathy to you in your great loss.

Even now I can hardly believe it is true that dear little Betty is no longer with us, and what must it be for you? She was truly the sunbeam of the Base, always happy and cheerful,

and she died in the same way, with a smile on her lips.

We who knew her out here loved her dearly, and I am sure many of them would join with me in sympathy for you did they know I was writing.

"On Active Service"—yes, right up to the end. You may well be proud of Betty; we all are, and feel we have lost such a staunch little comrade.

We laid her to rest in the Military Cemetery, her face towards England, a soldier among soldiers.

Please do not trouble to answer this, it is only to let you know how proud we are of Betty, and how sad we are for you.—Yours sincerely,

WINNIFRED J. SCOTT.

OFFICES OF THE WAR CABINET,
6 WHITEHALL GARDENS, S.W.,
13th February 1919.

MY DEAR STEVENSON,—. . . I remember Betty very well as a little girl, with her hair down

her back, and it was difficult to believe that she should have grown into the fine woman who gave her life for her country in the Great War, and of whose cheerfulness in danger I heard from several sources among my friends in France. . . .—Yours very sincerely,

ERIC GEDDES.

CHAPTER XXV

MORE LETTERS

On Active Service
with the British Expeditionary Force,

A.P.O., S. 11,
10*th June* 1918.

Dear Mrs Stevenson, — I refrained from writing to you last week as I know you must be receiving such an enormous amount of letters about dear old Bet.

We became great friends immediately, which seemed only natural then as I am just a year younger than she. We were moved into a little villa in the woods, under the care of a Miss Hall, one of the drivers whom we both loved before we had been there long.

We were rather indignant at being moved at first, but it was so nice there during the summer that we forgot all our troubles and settled down

in the same room. We never could feel dull when Betty was anywhere near, she was always so jolly, never said anything nasty about anyone seriously.

I remember once we were invited to a Revue given by the New Zealand Division at their concert hut. They had reserved seats for us at the front, and when we walked in together the whole audience got up and cheered, as we were the only girls there! we were most awfully excited about it. It was entirely due to Betty really that we were invited to any of these shows; where Betty went I usually followed. Nobody ever met her without liking her; she had an enormous amount of friends, varying from generals to dispatch riders.

Betty and I were always getting muddled up, not because we are in any way alike, but we are the same height and dressed more or less alike, and were together a good deal, and one day one of the numerous parsons here remarked, "I always mix Miss Stevenson and Miss Scott up. Which is the pretty one and which is the other one?" We always called each other "the other one" after, in fact I have before now re-

ceived a letter from Bet addressed to "the other one"!

In the days when Betty still drove, she used to be so awfully kind to the Tommies' relatives that we used to take about. It was perfectly sweet to see her talking to some of the old women who had come over to see their sons or husbands.

During last summer we had a great rush of relatives for a hospital base about eighty miles from the port at which they landed. Bet and I were very excited, because we had hitherto never been allowed to do long runs, especially at night, as these invariably were.

After we had been once or twice we went together in two cars with eight relatives, starting about 9 p.m. We neither of us knew the way very well, though we convinced every one on leaving that we did. Every signpost we came to we hopped out and turned a flashlight on it. Once we got so muddled that we knocked an irate Frenchman up in his house to ask the way, and gave him a packet of cigarettes for his trouble. Towards the end of our journey we suddenly came across a factory brilliantly lighted

up, which we both swore hadn't been there before. However there was no other road to choose from, so we proceeded along the same road, convinced that we should arrive at some distant part of the world. It turned out to be a sugar factory, which was only used during the summer and shut up for the rest of the year.

Everything one sees seems to remind one of Bet. When we slept in the same room we always told each other everything; there are few people that I have confided in as much as I did in Betty.

I cannot realise that she won't come back again; the cheerful atmosphere she always had with her is still here with us. I feel I am lucky because I find it easier to bear because I was comparatively near when she died, though I did not know until after that she had been hit. I was in the car just in front of the one she was in, and we ran on and just escaped the bomb that burst near.

It is impossible to try and tell you how we all feel for you; we know how much she meant to us, and can only tell in a small measure how much

she is to you. In the fourteen months that Bet was with us she has done more than any one I know to make people cheerful. We used to share a khaki knapsack which we used for our night things during long runs, and which has our names "Stevenson & Scott" written on. I would like to keep it unless you would wish otherwise.

I must say good-bye now. I wish I could do more to lessen your grief. I only wish there were more people in the world like Betty, more rays of sunshine. We are lucky here to know her as we did.—Yours very sincerely,

JOYCE S. SCOTT.

2nd July 1918.

DEAR MRS STEVENSON,—I thought you would like to know that when Barbara was at Les Iris in March, when Nicholas was wounded, she heard so much about how splendid Betty was and how popular, and had no words to describe the kindness of all the Y.M.C.A. people out there.

Although I cried miserably, I felt somehow certain that Betty herself would have envied

any friend of hers who had died so perfectly—and was comforted. It seemed the secret of her smile, for she evidently understood the triumph of dying for others.

I feel now as if I could only echo all the beautiful things they say about her in those letters, but from the bottom of my heart, I repeat them all, and more. . . .—Believe me, always yours, sincerely and affectionately,

GEORGINA BAGENAL.

From E. B.

Since I saw the terrible news in the paper this morning I can do nothing but picture her as I saw her last, with her dog, her lovely face, and wrapped up in her grey fur coat, and what fun we had together.

It is hard to think she has been taken at twenty-one, but she will be so happy where she is now, and she is making heaven more beautiful by her lovely presence. She was beautiful on earth, and now she must be beyond anything we have any idea. She will be with all the boys who have also laid down their

lives for their country, and she will be happy with them and is making your future home for you all.

From THE H.M. OF HER BOARDING SCHOOL

It is very very good of you to send me such a beautiful portrait of Betty. We shall all treasure it always. I love the steady look in her eyes, and the sensitive mouth, that was always so ready to laugh. I think that "she being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time—for her soul pleased the Lord." The letters about her are beautiful: they show so plainly the strength that was in her, just as the photograph does. I grieved when you took her away, for I saw the beginning of this steadiness in her, and wanted to see it grow. I need not have grieved, for she has learned all her lessons far better than any school could teach her them, in a school that has sterner examinations than any here—and she has passed with honours. I can so imagine how good a "pal" she must have been for you. . . .

* * *

. . . Her face in the uniformed picture seems to express all we know of her character. . . .

All the memories must be happy ones, with no dark corners anywhere, and you will be able to be thankful for that great mercy. It is not the length of life that matters, it is only the way it is lived. Death came for Betty very soon, but it could not take away all the years you had together in such happiness. For her, therefore, it is well, and as for you, you will just carry on as best you can, till your time comes too.

* * *

. . . Her vitality, her gift of treating the men, her kindness and goodness, and her unshakeable courage, had deeply impressed everyone she had been with. It's a pitiful thing when a "person" like her is cut off at one and twenty years of age; most people don't matter, the sum of life lived is not affected by their death too early. But at least she didn't live for nothing while she lived; her father and mother must be more proud than sorry when they hear from her friends what I heard to-day.

She was one of the people who are made for living and desire to live. I went to-day to Étaples to see her grave, and I spoke to some people she used to work with. You will like to hear how affectionately they thought of her, how highly they valued her; her spirits, her way with the men, and her great courage; she was perfectly calm and cheerful—a "happy warrior," and making thousands of other warriors happy How proud you must be of her. . . .

* * *

. . . She certainly lived making others glad, and not only did she do good work, but she must have helped others by her cheerful happy ways. We have often heard of her from chaplain friends and others who were at Étaples, and all said the same of her. . . .

* * *

M. O. S., —. . . We have enjoyed some of the best times of my life together, and she *was* a good pal. If ever I can do anything for you, do let me. I do feel proud of her. I know it's just the way she would have liked to have gone. . . .

* * *

. . . She is one of those whose spirit is too bright for this earth. But what happiness she brought to others while she stayed. . . .

I can only think of her youth, her courage, her bright spirit so intensely alive—more so now than we ever have known her, no doubt, if we could only see. . . .

* * *

D. W. T.,— . . . I feel absolutely helpless trying to write about Betty; it seems such a tragedy that she of all people who loved life so much, and made others love it too, should have died.

But she died at her post, serving her country on active service. And her service was given whole-heartedly, though she had every excuse for stopping in England after her first period of work in France. She knew the dangers and risks and terribly hard work, and yet went back eagerly to her work of helping others.

You couldn't expect anything else of Betty. She has given all her relations and everyone who ever knew her something to be proud of. . . .

* * *

R. L. W.,— . . . I saw her some months ago, radiant with youth and health, and pretty as a picture, a sight to fill one's heart with sunshine on the gloomiest day. . . .

* * *

It is wonderful to think of her at her age having done all and suffered all that so few women ever have the chance of doing in a long life time; but of course if she had not had the heroic temperament she could not have done it.

* * *

. . . You could never be too proud of Betty's bright dashing spirit and the whole heart which she threw into everything she took part in. To other people besides her parents she had so naturally made herself attractive that it did one good to meet her at any time.

When last I saw her we met unexpectedly in the railway station, and the impetuous welcome which she gave me, and her high-spirited talk on the journey, cheered one up then, and many times since then. For you . . . there remains nothing but multitudes of memories, sounds and pictures of her over all her twenty-one years. . . .

* * *

E. M. W.,— . . . It must comfort you and Gavin to know what splendid work she's put in— in simply being her cheery self out there among them all, besides working for them. It's being what she was that makes it harder to spare her. If anyone can be helped by their friends it's very certain you and Gavin are simply surrounded by them. . . .

* * *

Mrs Milne Rae,— . . . You have much to comfort you and raise your hearts in the knowledge that the noble young life was sacrificed to the cause of duty; that your precious child died a martyr's death. I recall a meeting at which I heard your father give an address—I think it was apropos of missions in some shape, and I recollect he said with a glowing face that if any son or daughter of his desired to dedicate themselves to a life of danger and self-denial, he would rejoice and give them his blessing. I cannot help thinking that his young granddaughter called down this blessing on her head, and of the joyous welcome that awaits her in

the Better Land from your dear father and mother when they see her martyr's crown. . . .

* * *

I. V. W.,—How proud you must be of dear Betty. She died like a soldier for other soldiers, and through sacrifices like hers we have got victory.

I was having lunch the day of the Armistice with some people, and an old Frenchman was asked to propose a toast. Among all the delirious excitement he said quite quietly, "To those who died to bring this about." I thought of your Betty, among all the heroes who had fallen. . . .

I return the photographs, having kept the one I like best. They are all very charming, and bring her sweet adorable face before one. . . .

She had everything, you know; she was good, and beautiful, and clever. You can't have more, can you? . . .

* * *

S. S.,—It was a privilege and a joy to know such a girl as Betty; she was so gifted, attractive, gentle and natural. I was proud to know such a complete example of the beauty and charm of English girlhood. She was "nobly

planned." May the world be nobler for her sake, and may you be richly comforted!

* * *

V. DE B.,—I have such vivid recollections of your Betty. Once she rode over to the Abbey with a Belgian officer friend, so glowing and rosy and happy looking. Then once she was at tea at the W.'s; she was so good to look at, you felt you could trust her with anything —you felt she was so entirely good and so true—she made a very deep impression. . . .

Yet you must be so proud of her. I want to keep her face in my memory.

It is for us to see that the great and high causes, for which she and all the splendid young have given their lives, are attained, and not degraded by those with lower ideals than theirs. . . .

The photo is lovely. It is a real delight, and does remind me of her face so vividly—then the uniform too, and the suggestion of hard work and service, and carelessness of comfort about it. I do value it so much and appreciate your liking me to have it.

May the peace be worthy of her—and of all the splendid sacrifices. . . .

* * *

I had a letter yesterday from a friend who wrote, "Mr N. (New Zealander), was here from Étaples, and I asked him if he knew Betty Stevenson. 'There isn't a soul worth anything in Étaples,' he said, 'who didn't know Betty.' Everyone called her Betty—always bright and ready to do a good turn! She was only in that particular car where she was killed because she had stayed to help some French refugees."

* * *

N. E.-O.,— . . . "The little Maid," I remember your calling her that, it was so sweet. Such a dear *gallant* "little Maid," always so full of life and pluck. . . . I was so struck by that vision of life and health and beauty when she came up to my laboratory at Royaumont[1]; and then seeing her, such a child as she was, looking so calm driving a car full of people into Paris; again so splendid with the men at the St Denis canteen. She seemed to me to face the world so squarely, so uprightly,

[1] In 1916.

so honestly, and yet a child withal, and at the same time with an extraordinary calmness; that latter quality seemed so dominant, and so curious too for one so full of life and youth; but it was a striking personality.

How proud you must be of her! What a glorious end, but what a tragedy. . . .

I cannot express to you my admiration for your heroic child; those calm joyous eyes—how bravely they would have faced death, her glorious death—her splendid life. Your pride in her must be immeasurable. . . .

* * *

Mrs Henry Fawcett,— . . . I have heard of your great and overwhelming sorrow, and only hesitated to write because I knew you would be overwhelmed with letters. Those you have already sent me help me in part to realise what you have lost, and what a singularly strong, brave, and lovable personality she had. I believe that the spirit of cheerful courage which she had will yet be with you and will help you. You constantly have her in mind, and the spirit which was hers shall also be yours. I feel sure that there is nothing she wishes more

intensely than that you and her father should one day be happy and be able to think of her happily, as we may hope she is thinking of you.

. . . I believe your child's brave and beautiful spirit will sustain you and help you. . . .

* * *

C. G.,— . . . This is woman's hour; to woman too it is given to lay down her life in a righteous cause—to help free the world from evil. I would love to know what Betty was doing—it was loving service of some sort I know, well and bravely done. She was so fine and strong and brave; so straight and honest, so sunshiny and bonny. And she is all that now, and something more. That awakening to a new sense of life, the understanding that death is but the shadow, "the valley of the shadow of death," the emergence from it, all the self-sacrifice, think of the vision she will have gained, the added usefulness, the added fullness and roundness of experience. And there as here she is working bravely and lovingly. The veil between is very thin nowadays. . . .

* * *

. . . I saw her with you in James Street, when last she was home, and her happy face impressed me deeply—expressing the brave and beautiful content of one doing her duty finely. I envied her then—I envy her the glorious end which crowned her beautiful work. . . .

* * *

. . . Elle a passé, en faisant le bien et en répandant la joie autour d'elle; elle paraissait faite pour le bonheur de vivre. Helas! pourquoi nous a-t-elle quittés si tôt? . . .

* * *

E. Llewellyn Hacon,—We heard from a friend of your little Betty's death. Daisy and I are grieved beyond words for you and her father, but for the child herself one could not wish a happier passing. She was so full of life and high hope and courage, and would give her all so generously and selflessly, one can only think of her with those other ones for ever young and beautiful, gone on ahead of us and beckoning to us. We often speak of those times when you and she came to Royaumont; we are glad beyond words that we were privileged to know her. . . .

* * *

I have known your beautiful and charming Betty ever since she was a little girl, and feel how sad it is that the world should be bereaved of one so full of power and will to do its service.

Our country has claimed another bright and precious offering, and the cause for which she too, like the flower of her generation, has given her promising young life becomes all the more sanctified in the hearts of all who knew her.

Please forgive me if I say what is in my heart. She grew up to be the lovely thing she was in an atmosphere of love, sympathy, and intelligent comprehension such as few mothers can create. When I saw her last—such a short time ago—in her khaki, she looked a forceful, buoyant, splendid young Englishwoman—"and yet a spirit still and bright with something of an angel light." What she was fills even those on the outer circle of her life with pride, and if she had not been what she was, she could not have given her life as she did—on the battlefield, "A happy warrior." To apply that term to her was a true inspiration. There was something so joyous about her.

One felt that she was indeed one "whose high endeavours were an inward light that made the path before her ever bright" as the poem says, and we can believe that it will go on brightening ever more and more until the Perfect Day.

* * *

STIRLING,
6th June 1918.

MY DEAR MACGREGOR,—I was horrified to hear last night from Étaples that your niece, Betty Stevenson, whom I knew so well, had been killed by a bomb a fortnight ago. I presume that you have heard the details. Betty was the life of the inner circle of workers at Étaples. She was amazingly clever, and, being so much younger than the most of us, was encouraged in her amusing ways. With it all, she had a striking dignity of character which commanded universal respect and admiration. No one ever dared to take liberties with her; she was more than a match for the rest of her fellow workers. I see her brave, self-possessed, upstanding figure before me as I write. She was a rare, sane, happy influence.

The Base is plunged in sorrow. I feel particularly for her two chief friends out there — Mrs Stewart Moore, who watched over Betty with a wise and jealous devotion, and Joyce Scott, a West of England girl about the same age as Betty herself.— Ever yours,

A. B. Macaulay.

On Active Service
with the British Expeditionary Force,

Y.M.C.A., A.P.O., S. 11,
B.E.F., France.

Dear Dr Macgregor,—I should like to tell someone who knew her how deeply and tenderly we all feel the death of our dear comrade, Betty Stevenson.

Over a year ago she came out to France to help in the motor work of the Y.M.C.A., and I have had the privilege of knowing her ever since she arrived. We all loved her. It was a great shock to me when I heard in London of what hap-

pened last Friday. The particulars I have just learned.

Her life in France was a very full and arduous one, but also a very happy life. She faced every duty with singular cheeriness and courage. Driving heavy-laden cars of stores to the huts, or weary-hearted relatives to the hospitals; taking a turn at the canteen, or helping to comfort and cheer the refugee women and children from the danger zone;—it mattered not what the duty was, she brought the same brave sunny spirit to the doing of it. For herself she never had any thought at all. She might have crossed the bridge that night with an earlier car, and so escaped the bomb; but it was characteristic of her to wait behind to assist some French refugees. In this ministry of love she died. There was no pain or suffering of any kind. The old sweet smile, Mr Scott assures me, was still there. Christ gave her peace.—Faithfully yours,

JAMES WEBSTER.

28th April 1919.

DEAR GRACE,—My sister-in-law . . . writes to tell me of a conversation she had quite by chance with a Mr M. who was out in France lecturing on something connected with agriculture of the devastated region. He told my sister-in-law that while he was lecturing a bad raid was in full progress, and he said he frankly admitted he was in a great fright. After the lecture was over, he said to the officer in charge, "Well, I shall have to stay here all night. My chauffeur can't possibly come through all this to take me back to my billet." The officer just glanced at his watch and said, "Oh yes, Miss Stevenson will be here in twenty minutes." Sure enough, there she came, he said, threading her way through all the shell holes and broken ground. He got in, and said to her: "Are you bound to come out when it's like this?"

"*Bound?*" she said, "I don't know what you mean."

"Well," he said, "do men order you to come out when there is a raid on?" "No,"

she said, "they don't *order* us, but of course we come."

She took him to his billet, said gaily, "You won't be too late for your supper," and off she went. He said he would never forget it. He heard she was killed a short time after.

My sister-in-law thought you would like to hear this account of her conversation. You knew it all before, but it is nice to hear by chance of your brave Betty's daily life.

L. M. A.

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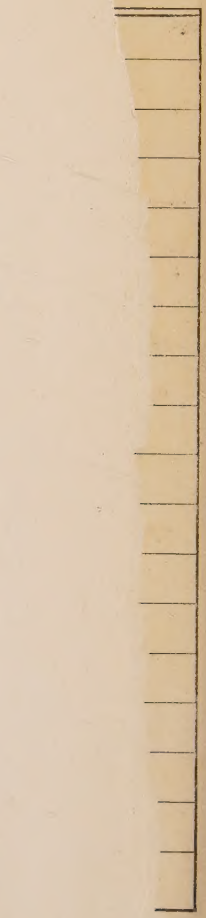

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